



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

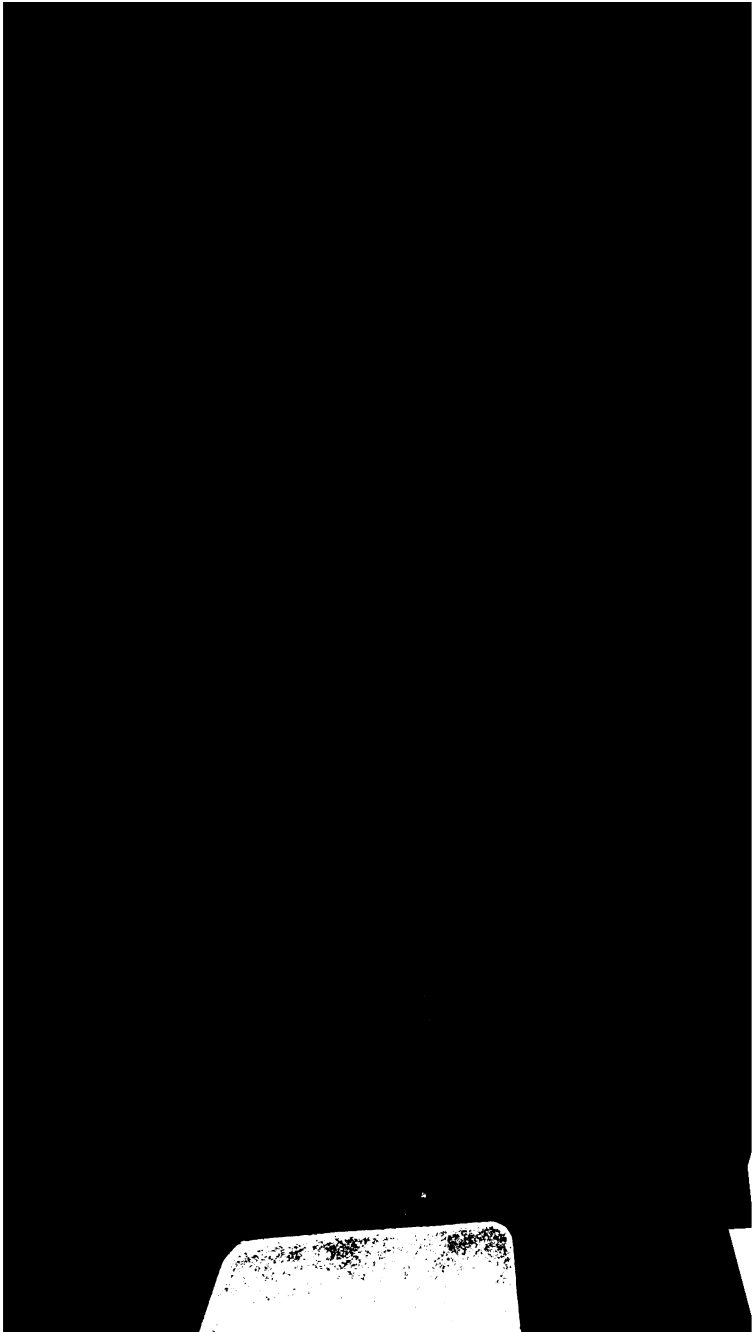
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

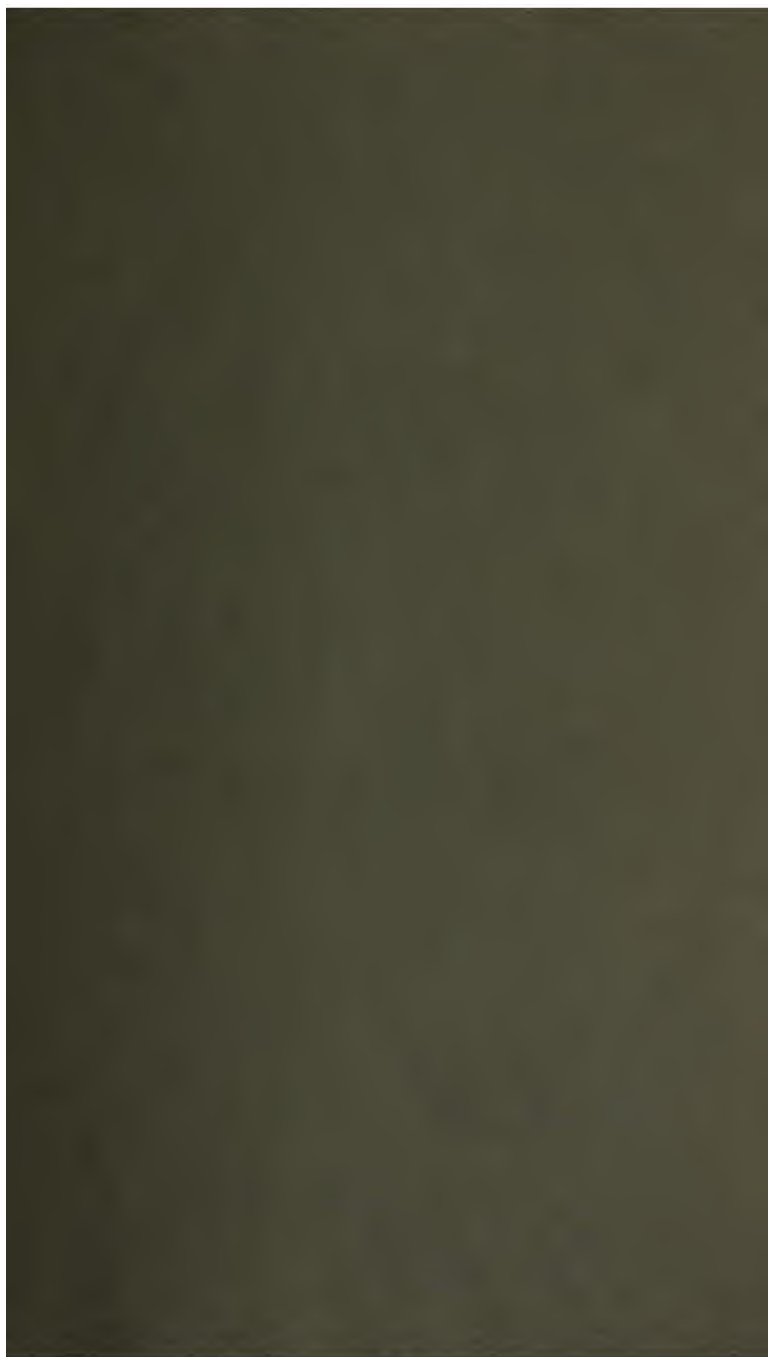
### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 3433 07496161 0







1



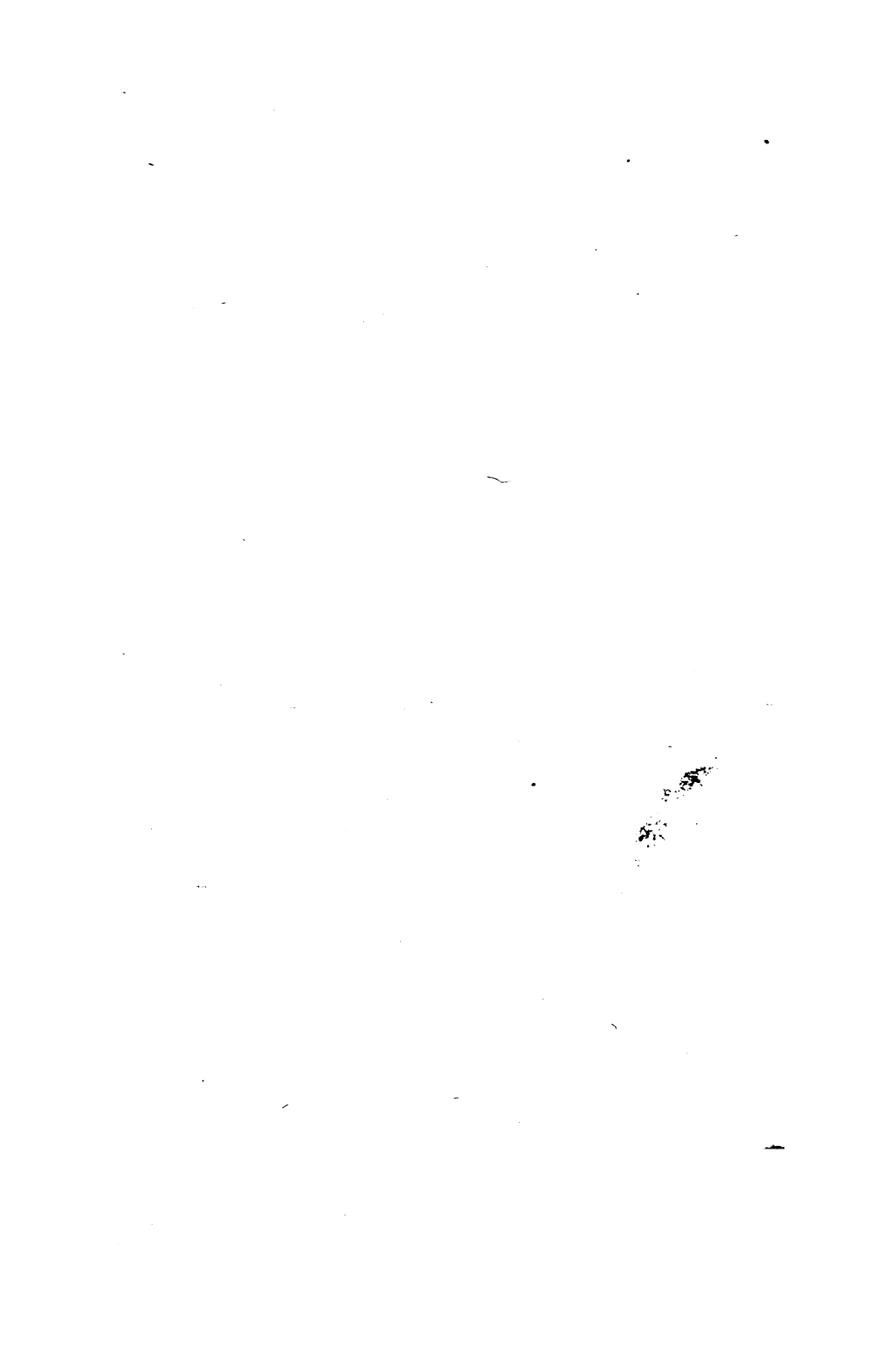


NCW

1/10/10









**TALES OF REAL LIFE.**

*J. Brooks.*



*Amelia (Alderson)*

BY MRS OPIE.



BOSTON,

PUBLISHED BY S. G. GOODRICH.

SOLD BY BOWLES AND DEARBORN, BOSTON; G. AND C. CARVILL,  
NEW YORK; AND H. C. CAREY AND I. LEA, PHILADELPHIA.

MDCCLXXVII.

1877

P

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**499970 A**  
ASTOR, LENOX, AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS  
R 1930 L

BOSTON,  
Isaac R. Butts & Co. Printers.

TALES  
OF  
REAL LIFE.

---

---

LADY ANNE AND LADY JANE.

---

“WELL, Harry,” said Mr Percy to his son, “which of my fair and noble wards am I to call daughter? You have been seemingly a long time suspended like Mahomet’s tomb between two magnets.”

“Alas for Mahomet’s tomb, my dear father, if it be not more equally balanced than my affections.”

“Then what think you of another simile—a child that is undecided whether to choose a peach or a nectarine?”

“No—that will not do, because the child has probably his choice of either, and I have not mine of the ladies in question.”

“But I think you *may* have.—Lady Anne Mortimer is a grand lovely creature! what bright dark eyes she has!”

“Yes,—and what fascinating eyes, color unknown, has Lady Jane Langley! I am sure I know not whether they be grey, blue, or hazel,—but by turns I believe they are all three,—and like a changeable silk, they are beautiful to the sight without one’s being able to tell what is the predominant hue.”

“Eyes like changeable silk, Harry! Humph! I hope you do not extend the simile to her Ladyship’s temper?”

Foot 7 July 1730

“ To her humor I do, and like her the better for it—  
 ‘ From grave to gay, from lively to severe.’ ”

“ That may be a recommendation to a mistress, Harry, but surely not to a wife.—Bright colored silks, to borrow your metaphor in part, are not good for every day wear ; one of a more sober and *even* color would do better. Lady Anne is the woman for a wife ; she is not so dazzling as her cousin, but I think her more estimable—nay, she has more beauty also, for she has certainly better features.”

“ Better features, sir ! So she has, I dare say, according to measurement ; but there is one thing which Lady Jane has, which her cousin wants, and without which a beauty is almost plain, and with which a plain woman is almost beautiful—and that is *charm*, or, as the French call it, *agrement*.—It is what women feel in *our* sex, but cannot understand in their *own* ; and when they see us admire a woman in whom they can discover no personal attraction, they begin measuring her nose and her mouth, and criticising the color of her eyes, and hair, and complexion, till they end with ‘ In short, *I* call her plain, and think it is madness in men to admire her.’ And to this gift called ‘ charm,’ and which I believe to have been Psyche’s celebrated box of beauty, Lady Jane adds handsome if not regular features, and a form, a complexion——”

“ By no means as fine as Lady Anne’s.”

“ Why, perhaps not ; for sometimes she’s pale, and sometimes red ; and Lady Anne’s color is permanent and unvarying.”

“ Unvarying, Harry ! when her bloom is every moment deepened by the blush of feeling and modesty—while her tall figure and majestic carriage inspire respect as well as admiration.”

“ There again, sir—it is that very height, that very majesty that I do not admire.—Not but that Lady Jane *can* be majestic too—but she had rather *please* than *awe* ; rather *attract* than *repel*.”

“ Lady Jane majestic ! By the side of Lady Anne she is rather short than otherwise.”

“Short by the side of Lady Anne! to be sure she is—an acacia by the side of a Lombardy poplar! Lady Anne is

‘Tall and as straight as a poplar tree,  
And her cheeks are as red as a rose.’

but she wants *grace*,—and so does a poplar. There’s Lady Jane throwing her lovely person into a thousand graceful attitudes like a bending woodbine, while her cousin sits in one posture like a cedar of Lebanon. Lady Jane is a beautiful running accompaniment, while Lady Anne is four minims in a bar. Besides, Lady Anne often speaks disagreeable truths, and Lady Jane none but agreeable ones.”

“In short, my dear son, you are in love with Lady Jane, and to a man in love there is only one beautiful woman in the world.”

“There you wrong me, sir,—I think Lady Anne very handsome, and I adore her virtues; and if she would but condescend to be *agreeable*, she would be irresistible.”

“Well, well, I see all hope for her is over, and I am sorry for it;—for I fear that you like Lady Jane, and Lady Anne likes you.”

“I hope not. But, sir, don’t you think Lady Jane loves me a *little*?”

“I can’t tell—for that ‘*charm*,’ as you call it, throws such a bright halo round her, that I have as yet been unable to see her clearly enough to discern what her real feelings are.—However, as my first wish is to see you happy, and as you can only be so with the woman of your heart, I will watch Lady Jane. I should have preferred Lady Anne. Besides, she has a great fortune, and her cousin comparatively a small one. But you have wealth enough, and more than enough with your late uncle’s, in possession, and mine in prospect; therefore you can please yourself without violating the dictates of worldly prudence; and I hope I shall live at least to see you married.”

“I hope you will live,” said Harry Percy, affectionately, “to see me and my children married, dear sir.” Then



seeing Lady Jane and Lady Anne in the garden, he eagerly ran to meet them.

It would indeed have been more for Harry Percy's interest to marry Lady Anne, as, not from vice but thoughtlessness, he had, though but just five and twenty, been forced to mortgage his only unentailed estate so considerably, that, as he had no ready money, a large sum with a wife could alone set him free; and as he knew that his father had no money to spare, he had carefully concealed from him an embarrassment which he well knew it would distress him not to be able to remove.

Lady Jane was the daughter of the Earl of M——, and Lady Anne of the Marquis of D——, and both were left by their fathers to the guardianship of Mr Percy. As Mrs Percy was living when these noblemen died, her husband's wards came to reside with her; and till he went abroad with a tutor at the age of eighteen, Percy had many opportunities of being with the young and beautiful cousins, of whom one was four, the other three years younger than himself.

At one and twenty he returned, and found Lady Jane, who with her cousin had been presented at court, a reigning belle in the fashionable world, and more full of fascination than ever; but though courted by all who beheld her, her eyes seemed, he thought, to look as tenderly as ever on *him*. Not so Lady Anne's; her eyes never sought his; on the contrary, they seemed to avoid them; and when he returned, after a long and severe illness, during which his life was despaired of, the one wounded his self love, while the other soothed it. Lady Anne, when she saw him, was so struck with the change in his appearance that she could not at first speak; and when she did, it was to say in a faltering voice, and with eyes filled with tears—"Oh! Harry, how *ill* you look! I declare I should scarcely have known you! and you look so old!"

"Don't mind what that raven says, Harry," exclaimed Lady Jane, "she always sees the worst side of every thing; and I assure you *I* think, though you look as if

you had been *unwell*, you never looked handsomer nor younger in your life."

Harry held a hand of each at this moment ; and it is certain that he pressed Lady Jane's very tenderly, while he held Lady Anne's so coldly that she withdrew it.— From that moment Lady Jane stood on a vantage ground with Harry Percy which she never lost ; for he thought the remark of Lady Jane kind, that of the other cruel ; and though deeply impressed before he went abroad in favor of Lady Anne, he saw not, he heeded not, he understood not the faltering voice, the involuntary tears that accompanied her remark,—a remark impelled by real tenderness thrown by the anxieties of tenderness completely off its guard. Nor did he observe that, though her words were flattering, Lady Jane's feelings were cold. He therefore banished Lady Anne from his best affections, and received Lady Jane to them,—like many others, rejecting the substance for the shadow.

Lady Anne soon saw, and secretly deplored, the superiority of Lady Jane's influence over Percy to her own ; for she thought *she* loved him better than her cousin, and for his *own* sake she wished that he had preferred her. But hers was no common mind, no common character. She thought that passions were given us for our slaves, not our tyrants ; and the love which was not likely to be returned, she felt it her duty first to conceal, and ultimately to *subdue*, or at least to keep within proper bounds. But her trials were severe ; and while she witnessed the progress of Percy's attachment to Lady Jane, she sighed to think how happy such evidences of love would have made her ; and she sighed the more, because she felt assured that this devoted love was thrown away on one who was too volatile to feel the value of it. No wonder, therefore, that the usually *brusque* and severe manner of Lady Anne should become still more so.

"The carriage has been at the door this hour, Jane, and Mrs Corbet and I have been waiting twenty minutes for you," said Lady Anne one morning, "and yet you are not ready—It is very strange you can never be punctual."

"Nor you *patient*, Anne."

"What is the matter?" said Percy entering. "Lady Anne, you look disturbed."

"Oh! she has only been scolding me as usual."

"Scolding you?"

"You, I suppose, think no one can be so hard-hearted as to scold such a divinity!" replied Lady Anne with a laugh that was *no* laugh.

"But what has Lady Jane done?"

"She is not ready, according to custom—and I am sure, Harry, I have heard you say that punctuality is a virtue."

"True;—but is not impatience a *vice*?"

"*There*, Anne! do you hear that?"

"I do," she replied, blushing deeply from pain at being reproved by the man she loved; "and I dare say, yes—I was—I am too impatient."

"Amiable candor!" cried Percy; "and I in return must own that I think Lady Jane's habit of not being punctual a most vile one, and—"

"What is that you are saying, young gentleman?" said Lady Jane turning round from the glass, at which she was adjusting her headdress, and looking at him with one of her most arch looks and dimpled smiles.

"I was saying the truth—that you are not perfect;" but looking fondly and even familiarly in her face as he spoke,

'If to thy share some female errors fall,  
'Look in thy face and one forgets them all.'

"Thank ye, young man—very civil, and very *new*. But Lady Anne has a face also, and a very handsome one it is."

"But not a face to be looked up at as yours was just now," said Lady Anne almost pettishly.

"There, Harry! do you not see her meaning? She is such a prude, she thought your look and manner too free, and that no one dared look at her so."

Lady Anne had *no* such meaning ; but conscious that she spoke in *envy*, though not in *blame*, she remained silent ; and Percy, quite lost in admiration of her rival, cared not to reply.

“ How that gown becomes you !” said Harry, “ and how pretty it is !”

“ Do you think so ?”

“ Yes—or else it is you who become the gown, and impart to it your graces.”

“ Do you like it better than Lady Anne’s ?”

“ I may be *wrong*,—but I certainly do.”

“ A fair take in !” replied the mischievous Lady Jane laughing, “ for they are both alike ; only I know how to put on a gown, and she does not. Only see how her gown sits !—Why, my dear, one would think you were crooked.”

“ I dressed myself,” she replied.

“ And why, pray ?”

“ Because my maid was not quite well.”

“ But you could have had mine.”

“ Am I never to learn to wait on myself, and be an independent rational being ?”

“ There ! Now Anne is in her heroics and moral sublimities, Harry, I must interrupt her ; therefore pray go and call up the carriage.”

“ So Anne ! you thought Harry’s look too free, did you ?”

“ No such thing, Jane,” she answered, her ingenuous mind disdaining the least approach to falsehood—“ I meant very differently—I meant,—” and here her voice faltered—“ I meant that my face had not the *charms* of yours, and therefore was not likely to be looked at *so, so fondly*.”

“ Well said, modest, humble Lady Anne ! But I must tell Harry,—may I ?”

“ If you please ; for the disingenuousness of being silent when you accused me before, is on my mind.”

“ What a delicate conscience is thine !” said Lady Jane laughing.

“O Percy!” she exclaimed, as he returned and hung over her delighted, while he handed her down stairs, “I have Anne’s confessions to make.” And Lady Anne stayed behind till she thought all was said. Then, with one of her most majestic looks, she gave him her hand when he returned to meet her. But if she meant the look to awe Percy into forbearing to compliment her on her modest idea of her own face, it was thrown away; for he felt that what Lady Anne said was *just*,—he *could* not have looked at *her* in that manner,—and he was too honest to say what he could not mean. Whether Lady Anne suspected this truth I know not; but she felt sad and uncomfortable, and was very glad Percy did not accompany them in their drive.

It is very certain that Lady Jane dearly loved Lady Anne, and when alone with her every feeling but of affection towards her was at rest; but when with her in the presence of others, she had such a consciousness of Lady Anne’s superiority, and such a restless dread lest others should perceive it too, that she could not be easy without playing upon her noble cousin, and pointing out the bad style of her dress, and her occasional roughness of reproofs and manner. There are two sorts of jealousy;—the one struts a heroine with a poisoned bowl and bloody dagger—the other is only armed with pins and needles, and is no heroine at all;—but she makes such a use of her weapons, that she does as much and more harm to domestic happiness, and the interests of society, than her more lofty and impassioned sister.—This antiheroic jealousy was felt by Lady Jane, and it impelled her to stick pins, that is, to inflict trifling wounds on Lady Anne, except when *alone*, and then affection was triumphant.

“My dearest Anne,” said Lady Jane during their drive, “I am afraid I distressed you by my flippancy just now?”

“No—you only fretted me, and to that I am pretty well accustomed.”

“How sorry I am! But I will learn to behave better—indeed I will—for I am sure I love you, Anne! tenderly love you?”

"It would be strange if you did not Jane! It would be strange if two orphans like us, left to the care of the same guardian, and nearly akin in blood, should not love each other. It would be unnatural, it would be base."

"Aye, indeed; and I should be wickedly ungrateful, Anne, if I did not love you—for you are so kind to me! How should I get out of the embarrassments my extravagance involves me in but for you?"

"Nonsense!" replied lady Anne. "I have so few wants myself, that I can supply yours—and I have a pleasure in doing so."

Here the coach stopped at a shop in Bond-street, and the door was instantly thronged with fashionable men. Away flew all the pensive, sentimental graces Lady Jane's countenance had worn as she gazed on the saddened one of Lady Anne, and she beamed on the beaux from the door of the carriage in all the brilliance of a reigning belle.

"I think I see Lady Anne in yon corner," said Lord Lorimer,—“I hope her ladyship's well,” bowing very respectfully, having only given Lady Jane a nod.

The latter felt the difference and was piqued. “No,” she replied for her cousin, “Lady Anne is very unwell. Don't you see how she is muffled up?”

“I never was better in my life,” said Lady Anne leaning forward, and speaking in her most abrupt manner; “and my being *muffled* up, as Lady Jane calls it, is an act of choice, not necessity.”

“You hear her; you see she will not allow me to make an excuse for her old woman's dress.—Is she not, my lord, a beautiful blowsy?”

“Beautiful she always is,” replied Lord Lorimer.

“Oh! I know why *you* think so;—it is in return for Lady Anne's saying you were—but I dare not repeat what she said.”

“You overpower me, Lady Jane,” said Lord Lorimer conceitedly.

“It is true,—is it not Lady Anne? Did you not highly extol Lord Lorimer?”—added Lady Jane, well knowing what her answer would be,

"I never speak against my conscience," replied Lady Anne roughly, "and therefore I *could* not do it."

"O fy, fy, Lady Anne! what have you said? But indeed, my lord, you need not look so angry; for women, you know, are always rude to those they like best."

"Yes, yes," said Lord Lorimer, "that is human nature."

"But it is not *mine*, my lord, I assure you," cried Lady Anne angrily. "Lady Jane, I choose to drive on, for I am tired of this nonsense." So saying, she desired the footman to give her order, and the coach proceeded.

"Dear Anne!" said Lady Jane, "I see I have offended again."

"Yes;—I am angry now.—What could induce you to flatter that coxcomb Lord Lorimer at my expense?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I believe it was from compassion, lest he should fall in love with you,—for your haughtiness, Anne, is as powerful a preservative from the effects of your charms, as is the offensive smell of some beautiful but poisonous berries; their hue attracts, but their scent repels; therefore the thirsty traveller escapes."

"Am I so *very* rude, so *very* repellent Jane?"

"RATHER so, my dear; and but for my little hint to save the poor man's self-love, you would have made Lord Lorimer your foe for life."

"No great harm if I had. But how *can* you delight to talk such stuff to these fops, these loungers, these killers of time?"

"Oh! a very harmless amusement. I am only spreading a few weak nets for a few harmless birds, a few hopping sparrows, and they are so slender they can break them at any time."

"But suppose, in the meanwhile, a bird of real value should, angry at your levity, escape from your net that is more skilfully woven?"

"Oh! if you mean Harry Percy! believe me, Anne, his heart is too surely mine for almost any thing I can do to break the chain.—No, Anne, I fear no rival influ-

ence, not even yours." (Mrs Corbet had just alighted to go into a shop, or Lady Jane would not have said this.)

"*Mine!*—It is unkind, Jane, to mock me thus," replied Lady Anne; "you may well scorn all fear of *me* as a rival."

"No such thing, Lady Anne! Of all women in the world, if you, as Percy says, would but deign to be *agreeable*, I should fear *you* with him, and every one."

"Does Percy say that of me?"

"Yes;—he thinks it is all you want to be irresistible."

"I wish I had known that sooner!" thought Lady Anne.

"Positively, my dear girl," continued Lady Jane, "you are like a man who has the 20,000*l.* prize in his bureau, and will not give himself the trouble of claiming it. Here's a throat, white and round as ever Phidias formed, and yet you conceal it as if it were hideous! Here is hair, jetty and glossy as a raven's plume, and you hide it under a bushel,—I mean a cap,—but it is a cap as big as a bushel! And here is a foot, a model for a statuary, of which you don't suffer even the tip of a toe to be visible! My dear Anne, if you were to condescend to shine forth in all your charms, I should hate you mortally."

"Nay, this is mere trifling," replied Lady Anne; "why *should* I try to please? The only man, you know, as you have unhappily surprised my secret, whom I ever wished to please, is lost to me forever, and 'I can hope no more.'"

The deep desponding tone in which this was spoken aroused all the affectionate nature of Lady Jane, and she exclaimed—"Don't talk so, Anne, I can't bear it; and I would resign fifty Percy's, rather than make you wretched."

"But there are *not* fifty Percy's, Jane. Alas! there is only *one*."

"No, not in your foolish eyes;—but in mine there may be many; and really, though I love him more than a *little*, only say the word, my beloved Anne, and I will say *no*, should he ask me to say *YEA*."



"But he *loves* you, Jane ;—and I prize his happiness beyond my own ;—therefore I *wish* him to marry you.—But tell me, Jane ! In order to reconcile myself to the disgrace of loving a man who never asked me to love him, don't you think before he went abroad I was his favorite, and that his attentions warranted my partiality ?

"Why,—yes, I *do* think so," replied Lady Jane, a conscious feeling making her blush deeply.

"Enough, I am satisfied," replied Lady Anne, and the coach stopped at a shop in St James'-street. A beggar immediately came up, and asked charity of Lady Jane.—"Do, dear Lady Anne," she cried, "lend me half-a-crown for this poor wretch."

"What ! give alms in such a public street as this, Jane ! It looks so pharisaical !"

"What signifies the look ?—Now *do* oblige me ; for, as usual, I have no money."

"Well,—there is what you desire ;—but it is so beggarly, Lady Jane, never to have money in your pocket."

"No,—it is wise if you will give me yours,—and it is *fashionable*, as no one wears pockets."

"Nonsense !—You know that I mean it is wrong to have no money of your own about you. I wish, dear Jane, as your true friend, I wish that you would learn to pay your debts, and be just before you are generous."

"Nay, Anne, remember what the man says in the play, about Justice being a hobbling beldame, who can't overtake Generosity."

"Yes, Jane, I do remember ;—and I regret that the very great man who wrote that *speech* should have put forth so pernicious a sentiment ;—for the man who——"

"Hush ; Hush ! dear Anne," interrupted Lady Jane, "or rather dear Joseph ! for, if you disapprove one brother, I hate the other ; and you were going on so like him ; 'for the man who——' How do you do ? How do you ?" cried Lady Jane interrupting herself, and Mr Percy came up to the coach-window.

"Joseph !" said Lady Jane, "here 's our guardian."

"What ! what did you call her ?" asked Mr Percy.

"Why, Sir, I am Charles, and her Ladyship Joseph Surface, at your service. And you, guardian, why, *you* shall be..... But come into the carriage, there's a good gentleman;" and he got in. "Yes, guardian,—yes—you shall be Sir Peter Teazle."

"With all my heart, ward; but where is my *Lady Teazle*?"

"O Sir!" she replied, affecting to hide her face and blush, "if you would but *see* her and accept her, sir, she is here before you! I have long wished for this opportunity, sir, and let my *blushes* speak for me;"

"But what will my *son* say?"

"O Sir; never mind what he says,—I prefer you;—and he can't help himself,—I think you, indeed I do, a great deal handsomer than he is."

"Handsomer I may be; *but* I fear that I want what my son says you have so *exclusively*, Lady Jane, and that is *charm*;—therefore I advise you to prefer Harry to me."

"Well then, what say you to Lady Anne?"

"Alas! I fear Lady Anne will have nothing to say to me. But this I will say, that were *I* a young man I should have much to say *to her*."

"O you cruel, mortifying, ungrateful guardian! So then I see you prefer Lady Anne to me!" and she hid her mortification in a pretended sob. "What, are you thinking of Lady Anne while you are looking at me so intently?"

"I was thinking, Lady Jane, how airs and graces like yours would become me; how *I* should look playing tricks like these."

"Like an elephant dancing a bolero, my dear!"

"So I thought;—but how long, Jane, will it become you to dance these boleros? I feel that all this may be charming in youth; but youth is a small part of human existence;—and I was carrying my eye further, and beholding you a few years hence."

"And what do you see, Anne?" replied Lady Jane in a tone of alarm.

“Oh! I hope, Jane, that all this playful gaiety, harmless as summer lightning, will end in the mild lustre of a calm summer’s evening.”

“Thank you, *dear* candid Anne,” replied Lady Jane.

“You think all this lightning will go off without any destructive storms, do you, Lady Anne?” said Mr Percy.

“I *hope* so,” hesitatingly replied Lady Anne. “Jane has a good head, and an excellent heart.”

“A truce, sweet Anne, with your flattery; or you will turn my head, however good it may be.”

The coach at this moment stopped at H——t’s at the corner of Sidney’s alley, and Lady Jane got out. After a few minutes she returned with a very handsome shirt-pin in her hand, and followed by the shopman with a large case of jewels. As soon as they had driven off, Lady Jane exclaimed,

“Oh! I have almost ruined myself—but they were so beautiful I could not resist! Only see!” So saying she opened the cases and exhibited a fine set of pink topazes with strings of large pearl intermixed, for necklace and bracelets—“and here, guardian,” said Lady Jane, “here is a present for you!” (giving the pin to Mr Percy.)

“I hope you have not been so foolish,” replied he gravely, “to squander much money on this unnecessary piece of expense?—Pray what did it cost, if I may venture so rude a question?”

“I dare say Jane does not know herself,” observed Lady Anne unguardedly.

“How! then she cannot have paid for it!”

“Paid for it! no, to be sure,” replied Lady Jane carelessly, “I have a bill there.”

“Then these fine things are not paid for, which you have just made your own!”

“Certainly not; for I did not expect when I came out to be tempted to such extravagance.”

“And what will be the price of these bawbles?”

“Oh! a few hundreds!”

“A few hundreds!” exclaimed Mr Percy changing color.—“There, madam! take back your present; for

I will not increase a debt so wantonly and needlessly incurred."

"You are not serious, sir?"

"Indeed I am."

"There, this is all *your* doing, Lady Anne," said Lady Jane pettishly.

"If it was, Lady Anne foresaw not the consequences of what she said," replied Mr Percy.

"I believe you think Lady Anne can't do wrong sir," said Lady Jane in a tone of pique.

"I wish I could think the same of your Ladyship; for in my opinion, running in debt thus carelessly and unnecessarily, is wrong; and excuse me, Lady Jane, but what vexes me in my ward, I should think criminal, and it would make me *miserable* in my *son's wife*."

Here Lady Anne felt faint, and let down the glass for air. Though we know a misfortune to be unavoidable, when it comes we are not able to meet it with firmness at first. It was evident from this speech that Mr Percy knew his son's intentions were *fixed*, and that the offer would soon be made, and she shrunk from the certainty thus announced; nor could she contemplate without generous alarm, from her knowledge of Lady Jane's extravagance, the probable distress which such a union would entail on the father-in-law, if not on the husband. A perturbed silence succeeded to this conversation, and to Mr Percy's positive refusal to retain the shirt-pin; and as soon as they all alighted at Mr Percy's house in Grosvenor square they separated; and all with the exception of Mrs Corbet, in no happy frame of mind retired to dress.

Mr Percy could not drive from his memory the observation made unguardedly by Lady Anne, because it was evidently the result of a previous knowledge of her cousin's habits and character;—nor could he forget the manner of Lady Jane when he interrogated her respecting the jewels; for, much as incurring the debt itself alarmed and vexed him, her manner alarmed him still more, as it showed that such transactions were habitual

to her, and that she was at once free from her own reproaches for her extravagance, and callous to his implied censure of it. Besides, he himself had seen in Lady Jane a love of high play; he had also often heard her bet, till he had been at length provoked to tell her, that he considered betting in a woman to be both indelicate and unfeminine. But he knew he could never make his son, as he was now seriously in love, behold Lady Jane with his eyes; he therefore resolved to endeavor to think Lady Jane's faults would, as Lady Anne said, be rectified by her good heart and excellent understanding.—Lady Jane's thoughts, meanwhile, were as painfully busy as Mr Percy's;—she could not but feel that if Mr Percy was vexed at her incurring one debt, he would sternly disapprove the involvement of many, and she dreaded lest chance or inquiry should bring to his knowledge the amount of her pecuniary embarrassments; while Lady Anne also walked pensively backwards and forwards in her own apartment, thinking over of what had recently passed; but uppermost in her mind was Percy's observation, that if she would condescend to be agreeable, she would be irresistible; and Lady Jane's flattering assurances, that if instead of veiling she would display her beauty, she, even she, should fear her for a rival.—“And *would* I, if I *could*, rival Jane in the heart of the man she loves?” said Lady Anne to herself.—“But *does* she love him? No,—not as he ought to be loved.—Still, perhaps, she loves him as well as she can love,—and that is not enough to induce her to conquer her mischievous habits, which will, I foresee, alienate the father, and make the son wretched. Oh! I fear that the lightning will not go off without many a storm! and the promised union will not be a happy one.” Here, unable to pursue the course of her own thoughts, she rung for her maid.—“And my dress too, as well as manner, is wrong, I find.—At least I feel, I own it is unlike other people's,” thought Lady Anne.—“Well, and that's wrong. Singularity of appearance, I have said, speaking of others, is either a mark of offensive disregard to the

opinion of other people, or of excessive conceit, or of incipient insanity—and yet it seems, I dress singularly myself! But I will improve in this respect. I will try to be admired. Suitors and wooers I must have, as the daughter of the marquis of D——, and a great heiress cannot fail of *them*—but Jane, happy Lady Jane, is loved *chiefly for herself* alone, and that I envy her.”

Mrs Corbet was indeed, as I before observed, the only one of the party who returned home as happy, and only as wise, as when she went out. This lady, the daughter of a baronet, had married what is called prudently and respectably, and had reached the age of fifty-eight with an unblemished reputation. Her qualities were negative qualities; and when she was left a widow with an independent though not a large income, Mr Percy, then recently deprived of a wife whom he adored, and whom his wards both loved and respected, was very glad to take advantage of his relationship to Mrs Corbet's husband to invite her to take up her abode at his house, and be the companion and chaperone of Lady Anne and Lady Jane; for Mr Percy knew that, if Mrs Corbet did them no good, she would do them no harm; and that he thought was sufficient, as he flattered himself that an excellent governess and the society of his admirable wife had already satisfactorily completed the education which the parents of his noble wards had begun.

And Mr Percy could not have chosen a chaperone for the fair cousins who would have suited them better; for Mrs Corbet was acquiescent in her temper, rarely gave a dissenting opinion, and was much fonder of sitting silent, lost in her own reveries, than in joining in any conversation whatever—And the saucy Lady Jane used to say, that in case of a want of more lights at one of their assemblies, she thought Mrs Corbet with a candle stuck in her hand would make a good pendant to the statue of Silence holding a lamp in the back drawing room, and be quite as mute and motionless. By a being of this description, therefore the events of the morning must have passed unobserved—and she retired to dress,

wholly unconscious that her companions carried with them imprinted on their brow the stamp of inward and painful perturbation.

"What cap and turban, my lady, do you wear to-day?" said Barnes, Lady Anne's woman.

Lady Anne paused, then with a smile replied, "Neither, Barnes;—you shall dress my hair without a cap to day."

"Indeed, my lady!" cried Barnes, looking delighted, "and shall I dress it like Lady Jane's?"

"Yes, if you please, Barnes;" and for once, since she came into society, the fine shape of Lady Anne's head was seen, and her beautiful hair shone to the best advantage.

"Dear me! my lady! I am so glad!" exclaimed Barnes, surveying her own performance with rapture,—“I never saw your ladyship look so well before.—You *do* look something *like* now.” And Lady Anne could not help laughing within herself at the contrast to *looking something like* now.

"So then," said she to herself, "it seems that before I looked like *nothing* at all!"

"And pray what gown, my lady, do you wear today?—There is a large party of gentlemen to dinner, I find."

"True.—By the by, I will not dine below today,—my head aches, and I will save myself for the evening, when Mr Percy has an assembly. Therefore, Barnes, you may leave me, I will not finish dressing till it is time for the evening party to arrive." While Barnes, sorry that the dinner as well as evening party should not see her lady looking so beautiful, reluctantly retired.

Lady Anne's head did ache, because so did her heart, and she wished to repose the former and commune with the latter.—When dinner was announced, which usually waited for Lady Jane, her maid told her Lady Anne was too unwell to dine below; and her good and affectionate feelings taking the alarm, Lady Jane ran to her cousin's room, and started and blushed when she saw Lady Anne *coiffée en cheveux*. So! you have taken my hint,

I see," she exclaimed; "and as to your illness, I believe it to be all pretence,—for I never saw you look so well in my life."

"I am so much *given* to pretence, that I do not wonder you accuse me."

"No, no, Anne, you know I can't really suspect you of fibbing—but what ails you?"

"O Jane! I am sick with many cares, and I wish to keep quiet till evening, as my head aches."

"Then do let me stay with you dearest Anne! perhaps I could sooth you?"

"Yes, Jane, as the sight of the gallows soothes the felon who is to be hanged on it."

"Nay, Anne, I know to what you allude."

"No, you do *not*," replied Lady Anne with quickness—"I am thinking of you and Percy, but not in the way you fancy." Here a servant came to say that dinner had waited some time for Lady Jane; and affectionately kissing Lady Anne, while the tears stood in her beautiful eyes, she bade her adieu, and in a few minutes more she was the delight of Mr Percy's guests as usual, and the pride of his son.

By the time the ladies retired, Lady Anne had reasoned herself into calmer thoughts, and her headach being gone, Lady Jane found her reading. "Not *dressed* yet!" said Lady Jane; "It is time you were, dear Anne! for it is ten o'clock; and at eleven I dare say some of those who go to six parties in an evening will be here."

"Do you think I shall be an hour dressing, Jane?"

"Yes,—if you mean to be dressed up to your head—which is so elegant that the rest of your dress ought to be well studied to suit it."

"I thank you for your solicitude about my appearance," replied Lady Anne smiling; "and if you will go to the company, I will join you as soon as the important business of the toilet is over."

"What gown does your ladyship wear today?" asked



Barnes, apprehensive lest the dress should not be as handsome as the head-dress.

"That white satin gown like Lady Jane's, which I have never worn."

"Indeed! my lady! Oh! I am so glad! I thought you would have never worn it at all!" and with eager joy Barnes brought the long neglected gown.

Lady Anne, had accustomed herself so much to wear dresses made high in the neck, that she could not at first bear to wear a dress lower than the throat,—till the thought of self-approving beauty perhaps reconciled her to her appearance.—"But I never can endure this petticoat so short in front," said she to Barnes. "I declare it shows more than half the foot."

"Dear, my lady," cried Barnes, "and what then? Lady Jane shows hers; and I am sure it is not half as beautiful as your ladyship's!" And Lady Anne was not a little mortified to find that she was pleased with this observation.

"Alas!" said Lady Anne to herself, "I have at length learnt to find that flattery, even from an inferior, is pleasant! O poor human nature!"

At last, and before the hour was out, Lady Anne was ready, and the fine suite of rooms was full of company before she made her appearance. A pang of jealousy shot through Lady Jane's bosom when she beheld her; and if instead of the cold look which she still wore, and the unbending majesty of her mein and person, Lady Anne had borrowed her cousin's cestus awhile, Lady Jane would have lost much of her power to please, from conscious dread of so formidable a rival. But Lady Anne's expression, though placid, was pensive, and her manner, as usual, any thing but inviting.

"I am easy," thought Lady Jane, especially as Percy was by her side breathing in her ear words and accents to which she was giving her delighted attention.—Luckily for Lady Anne's composure, she saw them not; but looking neither to the right nor to the left, she walked on through two rows of company towards the inner drawing

room. The Duke of L——, a fine looking man of fifty was there, talking to Mr Percy, Lord Lorimer, and others; but when Lady Anne appeared in sight he suddenly broke off his discourse to ask her name.

"It is one of my wards," replied Mr Percy.

"Oh! I suppose it is the lady then, who is, as report says, to be your daughter also?"

"No, indeed, your grace is wrong in your conjecture," replied Mr Percy with a sigh; "it is Lady Jane Langley, and not Lady Anne Mortimer, on whom my son has fixed his affections."

"Lady Jane must be a very extraordinary woman indeed to surpass that exquisite creature," said the duke.

"Yet she does surpass her, duke," observed Lord Lorimer.

"Indeed!" returned the duke incredulously.

"Not in my opinion," cried Mr Percy hastily.

"Lady Anne Mortimer! Oh! the daughter of the late Marquis of D——! and like him too.—What a noble carriage! She looks her rank!"

"Yes,—haughty enough!" again observed Lord Lorimer.

"I like a proud woman, my lord," replied the duke with quickness.

"Then Lady Anne would just suit your grace; and I should be very proud to dance at your wedding," rejoined Lord Lorimer, bowing low as he spoke; "but I suppose there would be nothing but minuets danced at it;—for the duchess is much too stately for any thing else, and—" Here he was forced to break off, as Lady Anne was near enough to hear what he said; and bowing to her with the utmost respect, he hoped her ladyship had quite recovered her illness of the morning.

"I told you in the morning, my lord," said Lady Anne very roughly, "that I was in perfect health, therefore I must wonder at such inquiries from you in the evening."

Lord Lorimer, nothing daunted, returned, "Why is Lady Anne Mortimer like a holly-tree?—Answer—Because, though beautiful and attractive to look at, you

cannot approach her without being in danger from her prickles, *alias* sharpness."

"But the holly, my lord," said the duke, (bowing, as he spoke to Lady Anne,) "is in its full perfection in winter only, and this lady seems in the perfection of her beauty in the very spring of life." He then desired Mr Percy to present him. He did so, and for awhile interrupted her intended reply to Lord Lorimer.

"My sharpness, as you call it, my lord," said Lady Anne, turning to Lord Lorimer, "has so improved your wit, that were I to liken *you* to any thing in the vegetable world, it would be to a bed of chamomile, which is the better for being trodden upon."

At this moment, in all the radiance of her countenance, and with all the graces of her manner, Lady Jane, flushed with the bloom of happy love, joined the group.

"Who is that Hebe?" whispered the duke to Mr Percy.

"My other ward,—Lady Jane Langley;" and he presented him to her immediately;—but before he could address her, Lord Lorimer put his hand to his cheek, as if in pain.

"What is the matter?" asked Lady Jane.

"Oh! the old matter. Lady Anne has been giving me a blow. Would you believe it? she compared me to a whole bed of chamomile!"

"Poor dear!—but be consoled, my lord. Recollect what I told you to-day;—that I know in her heart she admires you greatly."

"O that I had at this moment a window in my heart!" cried Lady Anne with indignation.

"Well, Anne, that's kind; for it would, I know, save Lord Lorimer's many an ache."

"O thou generous, soothing being!" cried he, "but for your flattering assurances, I could not support the misery of thinking myself abhorrent to Lady Anne."

"I must tell your grace," said Lady Jane, "that I call Lady Anne Sorrow, and myself Pity, in Mrs Barbauld's charming allegory—Pity being forced to follow

Sorrow through the world, to drop balm into the wounds which she has made.”

“I should think,” replied he, “that your ladyship would have enough to do to heal the wounds which you inflict yourself.”

“Oh! but the wounds which you allude to, sir, are made by arrows which tickle while they wound. Those which Lady Anne uses are of a very different description,—and—” Here she was interrupted by Percy, who now drew near; and while she turned on him eyes filled with joy and tenderness, he took her hand, and led her up to his father, who retired with them into another apartment; where Percy full of delight, in which Mr Percy did not share, presented Lady Jane to him as his betrothed bride. Lord Lorimer meanwhile went to pay his court where it would be more thankfully received, and the duke took this opportunity of trying to engage Lady Anne in conversation.

“I had the honor,” said he, “to know your ladyship’s father.”

“Indeed!” she replied with a look beaming with affection; “it *was* an honor to know him;” and the duke smiled at the bluntness of this speech, a speech so rarely addressed to a man of his rank, and one too so renowned for his talents. But he forgave it because of the filial tenderness which dictated it; and he delighted Lady Anne so much by the praises he bestowed on her father, that she invited him to sit by her on the sofa. She also said most cordially, when the duke reluctantly took leave as soon as he saw that every one else was going, “the manner in which your grace has spoken of my father, and the clear and just estimate which you formed of his worth, prove you to have been highly worthy of his acquaintance; and I doubt not, as yours were kindred minds, that he highly and properly valued *you*.”

“But may I presume, as *his* friend, to pay my respects to his daughter?”

“Certainly, sir,” she replied; and the duke, more than half in love, sighed, bowed, and departed. Some

few of the company however remained for the purpose of playing cards, and one lady coming up to Lady Anne, who was talking to Mr Percy, asked her to make up a rubber.

“No indeed,” replied Lady Anne roughly, “I never play cards; I think it a disgraceful waste of time;” and the lady, looking displeased and foolish, bowed coldly, and went in search of a more obliging person.

“My dear Lady Anne,” said Mr Percy, “why did you make that woman your enemy?”

“And have I done so?”

“Undoubtedly;—you not only seemed proud of your own superior wisdom in not understanding cards, but you showed that you thought meanly of her for being a card-player. I own to you, your words and manner shocked me;—I felt it *pharisaical* (to use a phrase of your own.)”

“Indeed, sir! Then I am sure I do not wonder that you were shocked.”

“You know, Lady Anne, how highly I admire you; therefore I hope you will pardon this freedom; but indeed this *brusquerie*, as Percy calls it, is a fault, and, as he also says, it is your only fault.”

“Does Mr Percy say so, sir?”

“He does; and what he disapproves and I disapprove, —we who love and honor you—surely you will think ought to be well weighed before it is persisted in. As to card-playing, I deem your objections unfounded and unjust. It is the *few*, not the many, who have talents for conversation, and who are capable of relishing discourse on morals, politics, or the belles-lettres; and unless persons have strong, full, and generous minds, conversation in all societies infallibly falls into gossip and detraction, unless cards are introduced; and when in such parties, I have congratulated myself on being able to play, as it enabled me thereby to make an effort to save reputations, and at least call forth a degree, though a low degree, of mental exertion.”

“But I will never associate with people who can’t converse.”

“Lady Anne, you flatter yourself; you must take human nature as you find it, and bear with the infirmities of other people; else, what is your benevolence but a name? However, since what I have as yet said has no effect, let me put *another* and *common* case to you. There are diseases which in their progress over the body, weaken even the strongest and most studious mind, and doom the old man or woman, however vigorous their intellect previously, to utter incapacity of relishing, or even attending to reading, writing, or conversation. In such instances I have seen cards a very great resource, and the afflicted object become suddenly forgetful of his infirmities by the entrance of a friend who could make up a rubber. Now suppose me in this state, and you and Lady Jane attending on me like affectionate children;—Would you not envy Lady Jane her power of aiding me by making up my whist party, or engaging me at piquet? And would you not be induced to think that any power which may be necessary to minister to the comfort of an invalid, and sooth the irritable moments of a suffering friend, is a power which the proudest of human intellects need not scorn to acquire?”

“But, dear sir, is it not shocking to see a man or woman on the verge of the grave, interested in the fluctuations of a card-table?”

“If it be the only amusement which decaying faculties can enjoy, and if the mind by being employed can be kept in that cheerful quiet state which is necessary to the preservation of what remains of existence, I own to you I am not so rigid in my notions, as not to view with complacency the chamber of sickness cheered by a harmless rubber, and the demon of news and lies, the spirit of detraction frightened away by the four honors and the odd trick; for no one can be always praying; and I believe the Deity never receives more grateful incense than that of a cheerful spirit, and a mind willing to make the best of its situation.”

“My dear sir,” said Lady Anne affectionately, “I will learn to play at cards, lest I, if it ever be necessary,

which God forbid! should be wanted to make up *your* rubber."

That night Lady Jane followed Lady Anne into her room, to tell her that Percy had declared himself, and she had accepted him; and Lady Anne was very glad when Lady Jane, too happy and too delicate to notice her emotion, retired, and left her to indulge her feelings alone.—But when she rose the next day, though her night had been a sleepless one, Lady Anne's manner was calm, and her countenance composed, and she congratulated Percy without any visible effort.

A few days after the Duke of L——, who had seen her several times since the night of the assembly, made her proposals in form, and in person, but was refused, and as he saw her change of countenance when Percy suddenly entered the room, he was sure her heart was engaged, and therefore dropped his suit entirely.

Percy, the object of affection to these young and beautiful heiresses, was at this time five and twenty; and if personal charms in a man could justify their admiration, it was indeed completely justified. But both the noble cousins required mind, virtues, and accomplishments in the being of their choice; and Percy was in heart, temper, and intellectual attainments, all that their ambition could desire in a lover or a husband.

At the early age of two and twenty he became a rich and independent man by the death of an uncle, and was soon after returned to parliament for the borough which his uncle had represented. Nature had given him great talents, which education had perfected; and the eloquence which had early distinguished the school boy, study and incessant practice had ripened into powers of oratory which did honor to the man. His maiden speech in parliament, on a question not of party but of general interest, was received with universal applause, and he was hailed by both sides of the house, as likely to become an ornament and a support to that party which he should ultimately embrace.

But it was not the intention of Percy to become the

adherent of any set of men; for, like most young men who are conscious of great powers, he scorned to tread in any beaten path, he scorned to have his opinions influenced by any thing but his own conception of truth, and his utterance of them restrained by any bounds but those which the strictest conscience approved. In spite, therefore, of those great authorities which teach that parties are necessary in all free governments, and that the exertions of individual patriots must always be unavailing to serve or save their country; and full of that tenaciousness the result of youthful inexperience, and that ardent, sanguine temper which fancies that what is pure and perfect in theory may be easily reduced to practice, —Percy still adhered to his resolution of being what is called an independent member, though tempted by the offer of places on one side, and the prospect of popularity on the other. Therefore, as he had not bound himself to think all that was said or done on one side of the house right, and all on the other side wrong, Percy occasionally lent the aid of his eloquence to the measures of ministers, or gathered laurels as a welcome volunteer in the ranks of opposition; while each description of politicians listened with admiring attention to his eloquence; and like all possessions which we covet and admire without being able to call them our own, they probably admired it the more, because it was out of their power to appropriate its services to themselves.

When love assumed its turn to reign over the susceptible heart of Harry Percy, instead of impeding it only served to forward the career of the orator; for the dear ambition of shining in the eyes of the woman whom he adored, the hope of receiving her praise when the debates of the preceding evening greeted her eyes on the breakfast table, inspired him to new flights of eloquence; and while cheered by both sides of the house, the lover's heart beat only with anticipation of the applauses that awaited him from the lips of Lady Jane, and he enjoyed "*the future in the instant.*" But though Lady Jane enjoyed her triumph over the heart of a man so distinguish-



ed ; though her vanity was gratified, by leading him captive whose splendid talents could enchain the admiration of senates ; still she was too full of her own conscious powers, too proud of her own ability to make captives, to enjoy as she might otherwise have done the exertions and the eloquence of Percy ; and while at *her* heart, at *her* admiration, the shafts of his oratory were directed, it was the bosom of another that they reached ; and it was LADY ANNE alone who felt what Percy wished that LADY JANE should feel.

Though Lady Anne had been of age two months, Lady Jane was only twenty. However, it was agreed that the lovers should not wait till the last year of her minority was expired, but that [the nuptials should be solemnized as soon as the necessary preparations could be made. A few days after this had been finally determined upon, Lady Jane, evidently in very low spirits, entered Lady Anne's apartment.

"What is the matter, Jane?" asked the latter in a tone of alarm.

"I am ashamed to tell you," said Lady Jane, "though you alone are the person who can relieve my distress."

"If I can relieve your distress, look on it as already relieved," replied Lady Anne affectionately. "Yet *how you*, with *your* prospects, can have any sorrows, I cannot imagine," she added with a sigh.

"If *you* had my prospects, Anne, I know you would have none," replied Lady Jane ; "for *you* would have no fears, no painful consciousness, no embarrassments ;—and oh ! how much more worthy are you of my happy prospects than I !"

"I begin now to understand the nature of your grief," answered Lady Anne rather coldly ; "but I wish you would come to the point at once."

"I will ;—Terror lest Mr Percy should conceive a violent prejudice against me, and forbid his son, on peril of his renouncing him, to make me his wife, prevents my daring to acknowledge that I am in debt ; and what I want you to do is, to lend me money sufficient to pay some heavy bills which my maid shall give you."

"Give you money, you mean, Jane; lending it is out of the question."

"Indeed it is not; I mean to pay you back every farthing."

"Yes,—no doubt you *mean* it,—but you will never be able. However, I do not even *wish* to be repaid;—to prevent your becoming a wife against the approbation of your husband's father, is a duty which I owe you, and.....But to what do your debts amount?"

"Oh! to a few hundreds."

"No more?—Then I can assist you without difficulty. But I thereby, I hope, purchase a right to conjure you, if you value your husband's peace and your own respectability, never never to incur debts again!"

Softened, obliged, and every worthy feeling triumphant, what was there Lady Jane did not promise at this moment? what was there she did not think herself capable of performing? And Lady Anne confiding, because she wished to confide, authorized Lady Jane to send her her bills, and promised to let them be discharged.

Two days after, as Mr Percy, Harry Percy, and the cousins were going to take a morning's drive, they saw two respectable looking people with five children waiting in the hall, whom the servants were vainly trying to keep back; and when Lady Jane appeared, the others having been waiting for her, the whole group precipitated themselves forward, and obstructed her on her passage, exclaiming, as they did so, "God bless you, my Lady! God bless you!"

Lady Jane visibly affected, and saying "there, go go, good people, you distress me," endeavoring to get past; but Percy catching her hand stopped her, and insisted on an explanation of the scene which they beheld.

"It is nothing—nothing," she replied.

"Aye—God bless her!" cried the mother, "your good folks never think themselves good, but I'll tell your honor all about it;" and Lady Jane, though not displeased at having her generosity known to those whose good opinion she was most ambitious of, attempted, but in vain, to keep her silent.

“You must know,” said the poor woman, “that good young lady, while alone in her coach one morning, saw me crying bitterly, and looking so ill! and so she asked me what ailed me; and I told her as how my husband had been bound for a friend, and had lost his all and was thrown into prison, leaving me to work for these five children and another acoming!”

“It is all true, your honor,” said the man bowing low, “and so the next——”

“Nay, John—let me tell the story my own way—and so that blessed angel asked me where I lived; and the next day what does she do, but comes to see me her own self, and then she asked how much would free my husband, and I told her a hundred pound. And then if she did not send some man to pay it, and my poor John came home again!”

“A very good deed,” said Mr Percy, looking pleased at Lady Jane, while Harry Percy kissed her hand in silence, and Lady Anne said nothing.

“But that’s not all, your honor; no,—for now says she, what would set you up in busines again? and as true as I live if she did not give us a hundred more! besides clothing us all as you see; and then when we begged to know her name that we might remember it in our prayers, she said, “pray for me as your friend; and the Reader of all hearts will be sufficiently informed;”—and it was only yesterday that we found out where she lived, and then we all said, says we, we will go and show her our new clothes, and thank her, and bless her; for it is not right that such a good deed should not be known, for it is a fine example to be followed.”

“It is indeed, and this is all true, your honor,” said the poor man, “and I’m a slopseller, quite at your lordship’s service, if you want any thing in my way.”

“I honor your gratitude,” said Mr Percy, “and can assure you, for Lady Jane’s sake *I* too will be your friend.”

“And *I*,” said Harry eagerly; “and so I dare say, if you need it, will Lady Anne.”

“Undoubtedly,” answered Lady Anne; while Lady

Jane, on her guardian and lover's tenderly commending her for that true charity that fled from thanks and notice, turned quickly round to Lady Anne, and said in a tone of pique, "Was *this* pharisaical, Anne?"

"No, certainly not," she replied; "but—" darting a very significant glance at her cousin. This glance was not lost on Mr Percy; and *he* saw with pain, but Percy with indignation, that she had looked cold and unmoved while Lady Jane's benevolence was thus revealed; and though Percy attributed her manner and her silence to a feeling of envy, his more just and more discerning father suspected that Lady Anne had purer motives for her forbearance to praise an action which certainly appeared praiseworthy.

The truth was, that just before Lady Anne had got ready for the drive, Ellis, Lady Jane's woman, had put into her hand her lady's bills, and she beheld with painful surprise that they amounted to some thousands, instead of hundreds. It could not be supposed, therefore, that in the *generosity* not founded on *justice*, but probably at the *expense* of it, which the gift of two hundred pounds exhibited, Lady Anne, the truly generous, because the truly just and self-denying Lady Anne, could so far prostitute her sense of right, as to praise an action which her private knowledge rendered reprehensible in her eyes. Therefore, though she correctly interpreted the expression of Percy's countenance, and sighed to think that he imputed her coldness to unworthy motives, she still persisted in not joining the general praise, and felt relieved when, the proteges of Lady Jane, having been consigned to the hospitality of the servants' hall, took leave with numberless blessings, allowing them to depart on their intended expedition. Percy was now the only happy being of the party. Mr Percy was grave; for Lady Anne's manner had rendered him suspicious, especially, as he read on Lady Jane's countenance a conscious and fearful expression, and an incessant watching of Lady Anne's, which bewildered and alarmed him.—But Harry Percy, absorbed in the recollection of Lady Jane's unob-

trusive benevolence, and in the contemplation of her charms, looked on himself as the happiest of men, in the idea of being soon united to so much beauty and virtue.

As they passed H——'s shop, Lady Jane blushed deeply, and her confusion was augmented by Mr Percy's telling his son the anecdote of the shirt-pin, and his reason for not keeping it. Percy looked distressed because Lady Jane did, and with a forced-smile said he was shocked at his father's want of gallantry; and that if she had offered *him* such a gift, much as he disapproved running in debt, yet his principles were not so rigid but that he should have accepted the present. "And indeed, dear sir," added he, "I have no fear that Lady Jane's debts will ever ruin me."

Lady Anne at this speech looked out of the window, but her look was not unobserved by Mr Percy, while Lady Jane turned on her unsuspecting lover eyes filled with tears of tenderness.

"I hope, Lady Jane," said Mr Percy, "you will, before you change your situation, call in all your little bills;—little no doubt they *must* be, as my allowance to you has been too ample for you to have had any temptation to incur *large* ones.—Your noble cousin had not one debt, and I hope that you have not been slow to profit in some degree by so good an example."

"Lady Anne is my superior in every thing, sir," replied Lady Jane, bursting into tears occasioned by a variety of conflicting emotions.

"She is indeed a most superior being," said Mr Percy with a sigh; while Lady Anne, confused and distressed, remained silent, and Percy whispered in Lady Jane's ear, that *he* at least did not think her so;—on which her April face soon brightened into smiles again.

"Have you ordered H——'s bill?" asked Mr Percy, still harping on the old and to him suspicious subject;—and Lady Jane, her countenance again clouding as she spoke, assured him that she had; while he saw at this assurance an expression of anxious alarm overcloud the brow of Lady Anne. At length their drive ended, and Lady Anne found herself alone with Lady Jane.

“ I see, Anne,” said the latter, “ that you were *shocked*, not gratified, at the scene of the morning.”

“ I *was*, Jane—for I had recently received and looked over your enormous bills—”

“ Enormous ! ”

“ Yes, to any amount which you, I dare say, *dream* not of ; and I think such bills should have been paid before two hundred pounds were expended on persons who may, after all, not be the most deserving objects possible.—But even supposing that they are worthy, amongst your creditors are some perhaps as poor, who want the relief of being paid their just debts—for, would you believe it ? your debts are to this amount ! ” giving her the sum total, —over which Lady Jane cast an eager and hasty glance, and exclaiming “ I could not have believed it ! ” hid her face on her arm, and burst into tears.—Well indeed might she be distressed ; for she knew that she did not mean to disclose all her debts to Lady Anne, and that nearly as many more remained behind, to be discharged by herself at the first opportunity.

“ Weep not, but look forward, Jane ! ” cried Lady Anne, “ look forward to amendment, and hear what I have to say to you.—You know that besides my estates I am worth personal property to the amount of some thousands, part of which I once meant to have expended on new setting, altering and adding to my mother’s jewels, to do honor to your nuptials.”

Here her voice faltered—and while she paused Lady Jane eagerly cried, “ Once *meant* to expend ! and do you then no longer ? ”

“ I cannot ; for I must recall the order I have given the jeweller, in order to pay your debts.”

“ Oh no ! I cannot bear it—it *must* not be—you must have the jewels, your rank requires it.”

“ But your necessities require the money still more ; and I must not, will not, be seduced even by *you*, and to do *honor* to you, to act against my principles, and incur a debt I cannot possibly discharge within the year.”

“ And why not ? ”

“ Because the other thousands are *disposed* of—I have two distant and poor relations whom I wish to render independent ; the rest of the family have neglected them, therefore it is the more incumbent on me to do my duty by them ;—and as they are old and infirm, they cannot wait to a future opportunity.”

I will not attempt to describe Lady Jane’s feelings at finding that the removal of her own difficulties, the result of her extravagance, (for charity like her’s might also be denominated extravagance,) was to be purchased by a privation to her noble-minded cousin ! However, the case was too urgent to admit of delay. Lady Anne’s jewels were sent for home, and the money intended to be laid out on them, when she drew for it, was to be employed in discharging the bills of Lady Jane.

But suspicion once awakened is not easily laid asleep again, and Mr Percy’s suspicions were on the alert. The next morning he met Lady Jane’s woman on the stairs looking over a long bill, and he could not resist his wish of knowing what it was, and what the amount.—“ Is that H——’s bill, which your lady told me she had sent for ? ”

“ Yes, sir, it is his, and another too,” replied Ellis, concluding that Mr Percy, as her lady’s guardian was to pay them.

“ Give them to me.”

She did so, and he saw with wonder and resentment that the two bills amounted to several hundred pounds. But suppressing his feelings and keeping the bills, he desired her to tell her lady that he had commissioned her to get in every out-standing bill immediately. Ellis obeyed him ; and Lady Jane, seeing that all must be disclosed, was forced to have recourse to a glass of water to keep her from fainting. In this emergency what could she do ? “ At least,” said she to herself, “ I will make a virtue of necessity, and before disclosure is no longer avoidable I will confess all to Percy, and I trust that in my ingenuousness he will forget my fault.” She did so ; and Percy, though surprised and shocked, lover-like,

overlooked her errors in her imagined greatness of mind in confessing them, and assured her she was dearer to him than ever.

Supported therefore by his approving and confiding tenderness, she was the better able to meet his father's awful frown when she was summoned to his presence, after he had received all the bills which he had sent Ellis round to call in, and which amounted to nearly two thousand pounds! On hearing the amount of the debt, Percy himself was as distressed though not as angry as his father; and he was the more grieved, because he had not wherewithal to discharge it.

"I have now to ask you, madam, if these are all your debts!" said Mr Percy sternly. And Lady Jane, resuming at once all the original honesty and generosity of her nature, replied, "I will answer that question, sir, only in the presence of Lady Anne;" who was accordingly summoned to the conference.

"Now, sir," said Lady Jane, as soon as her cousin entered, and looking at Lady Anne with an expression of affectionate triumph, "now, sir, I will answer your question.—I owe much more than the amount of the bills now in your hand. You must add to them the sum which my generous cousin had undertaken to discharge, though in order to do so she was forced to make a great personal sacrifice."

"It was *no* sacrifice, none at all, my generous, candid Jane," replied Lady Anne, gratified and affected at this unexpected virtue in Lady Jane; who, overcome by the effort, threw herself on her cousin's neck and sobbed aloud.

"O sir!" said Percy, seeing his father himself affected, "will you in a degree excuse a fault so honorably confessed and atoned for?"

"I honor, my son," he replied, "as much as *you* can do, a generous and candid avowal of a fault which otherwise could not have been known; still my resolve is irrevocable.—I have no money to spare for unexpected demands, and you, I know, have none; nor can I, *will* I



allow Lady Anne to pay the money she has promised ; therefore, on pain of my eternal displeasure, I *command* you to give up all idea of marrying Lady Jane till the whole debt is paid ;—for *never*, with my consent, shall my *son* marry to run the risk of being involved and poor through life, by having a debt of this magnitude to discharge.—In a twelvemonth Lady Jane will be of age, and part of her fortune may then be sold to liquidate her debts. A twelvemonth too is necessary at least for her to try to break herself of her pernicious habits ? and during that time she or *you* will have an opportunity of changing your minds, if you desire it, and breaking off a union from which *I* foresee no good will arise.”

During this speech Lady Jane, bathed in tears, reclined on Lady Anne’s shoulders, and Percy in great agitation paced up and down the room. “ Sir, sir,” said he, “ this is harsh, this is *cruel*, sir.”

“ May be so ; but it is unalterable,” replied his father.

“ Dear sir ! hear me, let *me* speak,” cried Lady Anne, feeling deeply for both the lovers.

“ No, most dear and most revered Lady Anne,” said Mr Percy, taking her hand, “ I *cannot* hear you.—Though no longer your guardian, it is my duty still to watch over your interests, and not to allow you to sacrifice yourself for others not worthy such a sacrifice.”

“ Don’t say so, sir, don’t say so,” cried Lady Anne ; “ Jane is *not* unworthy, and I should grudge no sacrifice for her sake ! ” Percy instantly seized Lady Anne’s hand, and kissed it with grateful emotion ; while, turning very pale, she hid her face in her cousin’s neck ; and Mr Percy, who saw her change of countenance, and understood her feelings, more mortified than ever at his son’s blind preference, darted at him a look of indignation, and left the room.

“ We must get this interdiction taken off,” said Lady Anne, after a pause of much emotion on all sides.

“ Do that, dear, generous Lady Anne, and I shall bless you forever ! ” cried Percy.

“ I will see what is to be done,” she replied coldly,

and left the lovers alone. But in vain did Lady Anne still request to be permitted to pay part of the debt; in vain did she entreat that the marriage might be allowed to take place,—Mr Percy was inexorable, and repeated,

“My son may marry if he chooses it, but it will be against my publicly avowed disapprobation of his *choice*;—and I am sure Percy will never expose the woman he loves to such an insult;—besides,—who knows but during a year’s trial of their constancy something may happen to prevent the marriage forever?—and if so, O! how I should rejoice!”

Lady Anne *feared* that *she* should rejoice too;—but too honorable to allow even a chance so flattering to her feelings to turn her aside from the duties of friendship, she still persisted in her endeavor to prevail on Mr Percy to recall his mandate;—but, “Never!” was his constant answer; “while Lady Jane remains in debt, she never, if I can help it, shall be the wife of my son.”

Lady Anne, ever since Percy and her cousin became declared lovers, spent much of her time in her own apartment, from feelings and motives easy to be guessed at; and therefore she was not soon aware that something unpleasant had occurred between them. At length, however, she observed that Percy looked pale and wretched, and Lady Jane sullen; nor was she slow to demand of the latter a reason for what she saw.

“Oh! it is only,” she replied, “that Harry is absurd and unjust.

“Only that!” answered Lady Anne with an ironical air; “I think that only is a great deal, considering he was neither absurd nor unjust before.”

“That is liberal in you, Anne, all things considered;—but my *guardian* would tell you he was *both* when he preferred me to you.”

“We will drop that subject, if you please,” replied Lady Anne coldly; “and now explain in what respect Percy in *your* eyes is absurd and unjust. Wretched I *see* he is.”

“Aye,—and he is absurd in *being* wretched;—for

the truth is, he is jealous. He cannot bear that I should flirt with that man worth a million who is just come from India."

"Then why *do* you flirt with him?"

"But it is not true;—I *don't* flirt; only the poor gentleman says civil things to me, and I can't say uncivil ones to *him* in return, you know."

"Tell him you are an engaged woman."

"He knows *that*,—and I take care always to let him see I love Percy.—But Percy's fear is, since he has known my propensity to spend money, that this agreeable Nabob, for agreeable he certainly is, should make me such offers as might tempt me to give him the preference;—especially as, to be *candid*, my pride is not a little hurt at the style in which Mr Percy has presumed to talk to me,—hinting as if he thought it was an honor to Lady Jane Langley to be the wife of his son *Mr Percy*."

"And so it *is*, Jane," interrupted Lady Anne. "It would be an honor to *any* woman, however high her rank, to be the choice of such a nobly gifted creature as Harry Percy!"

"Mighty fine! I wonder whether your ladyship's father the Marquis of D—— would have been of the same opinion!"

"*He would*, and so would your ladyship's father."

"But my ladyship's father's daughter sees differently;—not that she thinks she *confers* honor.—O no,—far from it indeed;—but she cannot think she receives it. And there is my buckram guardian setting up his large eyes and looking so grand! that for fear he should have put some of his proud notions into Percy's head, I *take care* to keep the honest lad's pride down by teasing him a little, and alarming him with the idea of losing me!"

"Jane, I have no patience with you."

"You never had any, Anne."

"And shall have still less if you can be so base as to delight in tormenting a heart that loves you; a heart that. . . ." Here, spite of herself, emotions, conscious emotions choked her utterance.

“I tell you what, Anne,” replied Lady Jane, “every one scolds me now, and I am almost weary of my life;—I see that I have alienated from me my guardian’s good will, my lover’s confidence, and my only friend’s esteem;—and if my situation does not change soon at *home*, I cannot answer for not seeking something better abroad.”

So saying, with an air of grief and despondence unusual to a countenance so animated as hers usually was, she ran out of the room, and left her affectionate cousin in a state of alarm and agitation.

In the evening, Lady Anne on entering the drawing-room found Percy alone,—and she no longer avoided, but sought a conversation with him;—nor was it long before, of his own accord, he revealed to her the anxiety of his mind. Lady Jane had been quite correct in her communications. She had contrived to make Percy jealous and miserable by the way in which she received the agreeable Nabob’s attentions;—having told him also, when he expostulated with her, that his father’s authority had dissolved their engagement for a year, and therefore inclination was now the only bond between them.

“I can only say, my dear friend,” said Percy, “that if she goes on thus, neither my brain nor health can bear the constant wretchedness I endure; for I have discovered, Lady Anne, that of all pangs to which mortals are subject, there are none so agonizing and so destructive as the pangs of jealousy.”

Lady Anne could have told him this long ago;—but she had gone through, had survived, and conquered them.

“Harry,” she replied, “you do not suffer alone;—Lady Jane is very wretched too.—Your father’s evident disapprobation of her, and your marriage with her, have awakened all the pride, the *proper* pride of her soul; and I must say, in Jane’s defence, that it must be a very galling, a very disagreeable thing to any woman to become the wife of the son, when the father would, if he could, for ever forbid the union.”

“True,—most true;—but what is to be done? for even *you* have failed to move my father’s heart in our favor.”

Lady Anne shook her head mournfully; and company coming in, the conference broke up.

At midnight when the guests were departed, Lady Anne retired, but not to sleep.—She felt that, like Mr Percy, she too had almost unconsciously looked forward with pleasure to the change which might take place in the course of a twelvemonth; but Mr Percy’s words had caused her to look into her own heart, and her generous nature revolted at what she saw there. To undress in order to obtain sleep was impossible; therefore she dismissed Barnes, saying she would, when inclined to go to bed, undress herself;—and then, till it was daylight, she paced up and down her apartment, struggling with her selfish feelings, and encouraging her generous ones, till her resolution was taken and her plans fixed.

“He shall be saved if I can save him; he shall be happy if *I* can make him so,” she exclaimed; and then with a lightened heart she undressed and slept awhile.

When she was risen, she went for Ellis, Lady Jane’s woman—and asked her, unknown to her lady, to let her once more see the bills which she had delivered to Mr Percy. Lady Anne again cast up the sum total; and having, without being forced to deprive her poor relations of their little fortune, contrived a way of discharging them all, she went to her bankers; and with the assistance of Ellis who, as she was tormented by the creditors, was delighted to have her lady’s debts discharged, all Lady Jane owed was paid in three days time; and Lady Anne therefore knew, that as the deed was done, Mr Percy could no longer oppose it, nor could he have any longer a plea to defer the marriage of Percy and Lady Jane.

When Lady Anne had obtained all the receipts, she put them on a file; and going into Lady Jane’s apartment, where she sat alone and musing over her miseries,

she presented the file to her, and desired her to see what it held.—Lady Jane having surveyed it uttered a scream of surprise, but so mingled with delight that Lady Anne felt herself almost repaid; and while Lady Jane in an agony of gratitude,—gratitude composed of so many *mingled* feelings, that it amounted to pain,—hung on Lady Anne's neck, and called her her saviour and the preserver of Percy. Lady Anne's tears flowed as fast as hers did, but *words* she spoke *none*.

"Where, where is Percy?" cried Lady Jane, "I must seek him."

"Do so," said Lady Anne, turning pale.

"But first tell me how you got money to pay these vile debts without disappointing your cousins of their little wealth, as well as yourself of the jewels."

"By altering my plans for the next year and half at least. Instead of taking a house with Mrs Tyrawley as my chaperone, and living up to my income and my rank, I shall take a small house, retaining Mrs Corbet to reside with me; for, to be honest, the money I have paid for you is the greater part of my income for the ensuing year, which my bankers advanced on my paying them interest for the money."

"O Anne! your goodness overpowers me. And for our sake you give up all that other women value!"

"No, Jane, not so. In making those I love happy, I secure to myself what, in my eyes, is of more value than a splendid establishment. Nor should I thus point out to you the extent of what you will think privations to me, if I did not wish to teach you, that the generosity built on self-denial is the only true and valuable generosity; and to lead you to follow while you applaud my example."

To this well meant hint Lady Jane replied only by a shake of the head and a deep sigh, and went in search of Percy, whom she found brooding over his imagined danger, and making his agonies worse by dwelling on them. But in the next moment he was lifted from the depth of despondence to the height of hope and happi-

ness! Yet still his joy was damped by the consciousness of the sacrifice which Lady Anne had made, and he more bitterly deplored than ever his own early extravagance, which had made it impossible for him to raise the money necessary to remove the embarrassments of Lady Jane.

"Best of women!" cried Percy, when he heard what Lady Anne had done, "how can we ever repay her? Yes, dearest Jane! yes, we *can* repay her," added he tenderly; "payment *is* in our power—Let her see us happy, and her generous nature will be amply repaid."

"And do you think we *shall not* be happy, Harry? Have your father's prejudices infected you?"

"How can you think so, Jane?" replied Percy blushing. "If they had, do you imagine I could thus rejoice in the prospect of being united to you? but let us talk of your cousin;—This voluntary kindness of hers in order to insure or expedite our union rejoices me also on her own account; for it convinces me she has not that regard for me which you and my father feared she had; for I am sure, from my own feelings, that no man or woman in love could endeavor to facilitate the union of the beloved object with another. I am sure I could not have done all in my power, Jane, to marry you to the *nabob*."

"Nor I, Harry, to marry you to Lady Anne, but—"

"But what?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Lady Jane. "But," she was going to say, "though *we* are not, Anne *is* capable of such a sacrifice." Knowing how, *ever how* enthusiastic an admirer Harry Percy was of acts of superior virtue, she could not bear, on second thoughts, to let him learn the whole extent of Lady Anne's superiority.

"Now, Jane," said he, "I must leave you, and go to the House, even without seeing Lady Anne to thank her for her goodness; and do you return, and tell her that she must put the finishing stroke to it by breaking what she has done to my father, and prevailing on him to put matters in train for our speedy union."

"I will," replied Lady Jane. Then saying to herself,

“ O poor Lady Anne !” she, almost reluctantly, returned to her cousin.

“ I will go to him instantly,” said Lady Anne in reply, well knowing that when efforts are to be made they ought not to be long reflected upon ; and hearing Mr Percy was in his library, she ventured to join him there. Surprise, disappointment, indignation, and regret, were Mr Percy’s first feelings, on hearing what Lady Anne had to communicate, mixed with admiration of her own generous self-command, since, more quick sighted than his son to the state of Lady Anne’s feelings, he knew and could appreciate the greatness of her conduct.”

“ But this is *robbery*, downright *robbery*, Lady Anne,” he said at last, “ for years must elapse before either Percy or I can ever repay you.”

“ And suppose I am never repaid,” replied Lady Anne, “ there will be no great harm—for, *indeed*, I can do without the money ;” and afraid lest Mr Percy should know that she had already made some sacrifices, and must make still greater, she changed the conversation, and earnestly preferred her petition that preparations for the marriage might take place without delay. Mr Percy looked at her with feelings of affectionate esteem and admiration, but dared not express his admiration, lest she should suspect why he so much admired, and by that means discover that the secret of her heart was known to him.

“ Lady Anne,” replied he, “ as it is your wish, your request, I will do all in my power to expedite this, in my eyes, ill-starred union ; for you have acquired a right to be alone consulted, and I will do for your dear sake, what I positively assure you I would do to oblige no one else. But I tell you honestly I do not approve this marriage, and I never never will say that I do.” And Lady Anne thinking it politic to be contented with this ungracious assent, as opposition might have rendered it still more so, thanked him even warmly for his promise, and retired to impart the news to Lady Jane.—Though, in the first instance, Lady Anne’s bounty was the result of



pure, disinterested benevolence ; still, upon a selfish principle of consideration for her own feelings, the conduct she pursued was the best possible in order to support her under the downfall of all her hopes ; for sweet and consoling to her was the consciousness of her own heroism ; and that feeling of hopeless love, which, if suffered to remain in quiet inactivity, would have preyed on her health, perhaps, and destroyed the energies of her mind, by being forced into action and exertion in the cause of the beloved object, served as a balm to the wounds it had inflicted, and enable her even to witness with composure the ceremony which gave the man of her affections to her envied rival.

“ He is my gift,” said she mentally ; “ but for me, she might never have called him hers ; and *if* he is happy, *I* too shall have been the *means* of his *happiness*.”

“ Still, Lady Anne, as she stood at the altar, was very glad of the assistance of the long white veil which she wore, to conceal the conscious fluctuations of her complexion. Nor did she raise her veil even to receive the parting kiss of the bride, who with her husband set off from the church-door on a tour of some weeks ; but she contented herself with folding Lady Jane in an affectionate embrace, and receiving without returning the pressure of Percy’s hand.

Lady Anne therefore succeeded in concealing her deep emotion from every eye save that of Mr Percy, and to him her feelings were sacred and inviolable.

“ Shall we take a drive into the country, Lady Anne ; ” said he, after handing her and Mrs Corbet into the carriage.

“ If you please, sir,” replied Lady Anne, while through her veil the deadly paleness of her cheek was visible, which *certainly* no longer bore that full *unvarying color* with which Percy had *reproached* it.

Mr Percy, conscious how great the effort Lady Anne had made that morning, was alarmed at her excessive paleness, and the sort of desperate calmness and stillness of her manner ;—still, delicacy forbade him to take no-

tice of it, and Mrs Corbet was one of those persons who look without seeing. At length, Mr Percy, who was well acquainted with the human heart, fixed on a method likely to rouse Lady Anne from her distressing state of quietude, by calling forth the generous indignation of her nature, and he exclaimed—

“O Lady Anne, married as my son is, my only son, to a woman of high rank, tolerable fortune, and of great beauty and accomplishments, I must own that my heart, my father’s heart, is not as well satisfied as it hoped to be on this occasion. I cannot, excuse me, dear Lady Anne, I cannot think your cousin calculated to make him happy.”

“Sir, Mr Percy!” returned Lady Anne vehemently, indignation bringing back the full tide of crimson to her face, “you surely, sir, forget we are not alone!”

“No, I do not,” he replied, “and indeed it is next to being alone; for, if you look at Mrs Corbet, you will see that she is attending to nothing but the pretty shops, and pretty men and women.”

“Still, sir, I must beg you, if you must say any thing so painful to my feelings, and so unjust at the same time, I must beg, I say, that it may be kept for my private ear.”

“Unjust! Well then, if our good friend has heard the accusation, pray let her hear the exculpation, and explain why I am unjust.”

“With all my heart; I am convinced that Lady Jane is taught by past experience, and that the agony she has suffered on my account will be such as to make her very cautious how she errs in future. Besides, she has strong affections, she loves her husband, and she will love her children, and do her duty by them.”

“No, Lady Anne, no; she may love her children, but you will be their mother.”

“Oh, most gladly!” cried Lady Anne; but recollecting herself, she added rather angrily, “I must again remind you that this way of mentioning Lady Jane is unpleasant to me.”

“Well then, forgive me,” said he; taking her hand, which had no longer the deadly cold feeling that had alarmed him, “forgive me, and let me talk to you of my plans, and consult with you about yours. Now you will have an establishment of your own, and as Lady Jane is married, you know it is my intention to dispose of my large house, and take a small one; for my income from my West India estates has fallen off greatly, and I wish to contract my expenses; besides, I shall never be easy till you, Lady Anne, are repaid.”

“No more on that subject, sir,” said Lady Anne coldly, “or you will offend me again.”

“Well—well—I shall think, however, of it as much as I please. The Duke of L—— has offered me a large sum for it, and I mean to accept it. Poor man! he would fain have a mistress for it, and I believe he will very soon renew certain offers.”

“I hope not,” replied Lady Anne; “for, though I highly admire the Duke, my determination on that subject is irrevocable.”

“Forgive me—I will proceed on business. I have heard of a small house near my son’s in Piccadilly, and there I mean to reside. And now, Lady Anne, in what part of the town, and in what fine house, do you mean to take up your residence? for I flatter myself that I shall have the satisfaction of seeing my old friend’s daughter, and I may say the pride of my heart, living in a style worthy her rank and fortune.”

“Some time hence you will, I trust,” replied Lady Anne, deeply blushing, “but not yet.”

“Not yet?—What do you mean?”

“I mean that for a year or two I shall be contented to live in a small house in the vicinity of Percy and Lady Jane, and with a small establishment, and Mrs Corbet has promised to live with me.”

“I understand it—I understand you, Lady Anne, and I see very clearly that your bounty to your extravagant cousin is the cause of this, and I shudder to think of the extent of her involvements; for I concluded till now, that

what I knew you to possess of personal property was expended on her, and not any part of your income."

"There you wrong Lady Jane, sir," cried Lady Anne haughtily; "my personal property, great part of it I mean, has been expended in a still more satisfactory manner; and I earnestly beg that you will forbear to give even an opinion on my plans, as they are fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians."

"Yet one word more—Surely Percy and his bride will invite you to live with them?"

"O yes! they have done so—but I know better than to accede to such a proposal. Young married people ought to be left to themselves, and fix the way of life they are in future to follow."

"True, *very true*—but where is this small house to be found?"

"In Clarges-street—and if you please we will go and look at one that has been recommended to me—for I should wish to have your approbation of it."

Accordingly they drove to Clarges-street; and Mr Percy, though grieved at the smallness of the house, could not but own that it was large enough for Lady Anne's, at present, reduced income; and with a heart more filled with reverence for her, and regret at his son's blindness, he parted with her on their return home,—he to dine with the Duke of L——, and Lady Anne to spend the rest of the day in her own apartments.

As he foresaw, the Duke renewed his offers now Percy was married, but still in vain;—and in a short time Lady Anne and Mrs Corbet took possession of their new abode. Mr Percy went to lodgings till his was ready for him, and the Duke of L—— went to the house in Grosvenor-square.

All these arrangements took place during the absence of the new-married pair, who at length returned to London to a very elegant house in Piccadilly. Percy looked, and evidently was, so happy that his fond father could not help viewing with complacency the woman who made him so; and Lady Jane had every reason to be

satisfied with the reception he gave her. But the joy she felt was damped by the sight of Lady Anne, whose excessive thinness and paleness called forth all the anxieties of her affectionate heart ;—and when she was alone with her she burst into tears, and asked if she had been ill.

“No—not ill,” replied Lady Anne coldly, “and my paleness is only temporary :—time, by removing entirely the cause, will also remove the effect, and I assure you my mind is now quite at ease.”

“I understand you,” replied Lady Jane ; “but believe me, in the midst of my own happiness I shall be uneasy till I see your usually fine color as bright as ever. And now, Anne, let us order the carriage and drive to your house.” They did so, and Lady Jane could not see without remorse amounting to agony, the humble mansion comparatively to that she ought to have inhabited, to which her errors had doomed her cousin.

“Grieve not for what to me is *no* source of grief,” replied Lady Anne ; “but repay me, if you think you owe me obligations, by abstaining in future from the follies, not to say *vices*, which forced me to live here.—Alas ! Jane, I have had more serious trials to bear, and I have borne them, I trust, well ; nor of my *past* weakness, as I may *now* call it, is there I hope a *visible* trace left.”

“I can assure you,” said Lady Jane, “that it was *never* suspected by Percy—but his father hinted to him his suspicions.”

“His father ! did *he* suspect ?”

“Yes ;—but, like his son, he most probably has been convinced he was in an error by your recent conduct.”

“My recent conduct !”

“Yes ;—Percy told me he was now quite convinced, by your making such efforts to bring about our union, that you were not in love with him yourself—for, if you had, you could not have done what you did.”

Lady Anne listened at first in speechless wonder.—“So then !” thought she, “the greatest proof of pure disinterested love I could possibly give, he deemed a

proof of the contrary!—Well, I *rejoice* though I *wonder* at his blindness!—“And pray, Jane,” said she, “what did you answer to this curious speech?”

“I said that *I* could not have acted so to marry him to *you*—and there the conversation ended.”

One morning some country cousins, accompanied by some London ladies, who were glad of an excuse for gratifying their own curiosity on pretence of gratifying that of their companions, called on the bride, and begged she would indulge her rural visitors with a sight of her wedding presents and wedding finery;—and Lady Jane, ever obliging, indulged their wishes.

“And this,” said Lady Jane, “was Mr Percy’s gift, and this my uncle Lord ——’s;” and so she went on.

“But where is Lady Anne’s? she is so rich!” said a lady who disliked lady Anne; “she is so rich that no doubt her present is the handsomest of any.” And while the conscious Lady Jane, who indeed knew the *magnificence* of *her* gift, blushed and hesitated, and would fain have been guilty of evasion, Lady Anne coldly replied, “Lady Jane has no gift of mine to show you.”

“Dear me! how extraordinary!” cried one. “Aye, well—I suppose you save yourself for the christening gifts,” said another; while all by looks and shrugs, and signs to each other, conveyed their astonishment at Lady Anne’s meanness, who having, instead of a fine house and large establishment, settled herself in a quiet way in Clarges-street, had set many persons wondering and talking, and suspecting her of avarice; and this declaration of hers confirmed the idea.

“Yes, yes,” again said one, resuming the subject, “it is clear Lady Anne will make a most splendid christening offering!”

“Lady Anne has no such intention,” she replied, distressed more at the pain Lady Jane suffered, than at their evident opinion of her meanness; and knowing Lady Jane, she every moment feared she would, to exculpate her, inculpate herself. Therefore she rose up and said, “I see clearly, ladies, what you now think of

me, and you are welcome to laugh at my avarice as much as you please."

"Your avarice, Lady Anne!" cried Lady Jane, "you, the most generous——"

"Be quiet, Lady Jane, not a word more! and if you say one word further to vindicate me from censures which I despise, I shall look on it as a personal affront." Then, with a look which awed the company in spite of themselves, she left the room; and Lady Jane, but for her cousin's prohibition, would undoubtedly have betrayed herself, and expiated on Lady Anne's kindness.

"O Anne!" said she when they were gone, "the misery I felt at hearing you blamed unjustly, was almost sufficient to expiate the error which occasioned it." Nor could she rest without telling Percy what had passed. But as he when he heard it exclaimed, "I am glad I was not present, for I should have affronted the women! What! dare to degrade by their suspicions the exalted goodness which not one of them could imitate!" Lady Jane was almost sorry that she had been so communicative.

If Lady Jane Langley was admired, Lady Jane Percy was adored.—Her name was given to every new and expensive fashion, and put at the top of dedications of numberless new works.—It figured also in the list of every public charity, it stood at the head of many a private one, and it every day adorned the columns of a fashionable paper. Lady Jane Percy at whole length or in half, was exhibited in the gallery of each fashionable artist, and engravings of her were hung up in every print-shop; while Percy enjoyed this publicity as a homage due to the idol of his heart, and as a proof of her transcendent charms; for now she was his, he had too much generosity of nature, and too much confidence in her principles, to be jealous of her, and he looked forward to her approaching confinement as the only event wanting to complete his felicity.

That Lady Jane might have as little temptation as possible to run in debt, Percy had settled on her an allow-

ance which even Lady Jane herself felt to be generous to excess, therefore he had no suspicion of her being again distressed in a pecuniary way; and though the consciousness that whatever she wore became the ton immediately, led her to vary her dress almost every morning and every evening, it never occurred to him that this could not be done but at a great expense. And as, unfortunately for his wife, he was too close an attendant on his duty in the House to accompany her often into some certain circles, he was also unconscious that she frequently entered into very deep play, and that the money solemnly destined in the morning to the payment of debts, and even to the purposes of charity, was lost in the evening in the intoxications of the gaming table.

Lady Anne meanwhile was rarely her companion.— Resolved to see as little of Percy as possible, that the passion she believed extinct might run no danger of being revived, she seldom visited Lady Jane when he was at home; and after she had accompanied her to Court, and gone the round of bridal visits with her, she preferred staying at home with her books, her music, and her work, to the giddy round of balls and assemblies, to which, untired as yet, the admired Lady Jane resorted. But Lady Anne had yet *another* amusement, which she fancied rational and innocent at the same time; and that was, daily studying the debates, for the delight of reading Percy's speeches; and while his thoughtless wife took no interest in his excelling eloquence, except when she heard it the theme of commendation from those whose praise was fame, Lady Anne knew every sentence that had commanded admiration, and was aware of every new motion which he was either to propose or second. Alas! while making him thus the occupier of her lonely hours, the Percy whom she beheld in imagination only, was more likely to be dangerous to her fancied freedom than he could have been, beheld in reality; for, deprive any beloved object of the charms which our own imagination gives it, and love would soon be our slave, and never again our tyrant.

At length Lady Jane became the mother of twins, and



the delighted Lady Anne pressed to her kind bosom two sons of Percy's. But it was not without deep regret, which was shared by their mother, that Lady Anne heard her cousin forbidden, on account of the delicacy of her health, to be a nurse to her children, and was forced to see them fed by other care than the maternal one.

As soon as Lady Jane was able to go out again, Lady Anne, who had during her cousin's confinement seen more of Percy than she thought proper, returned to her own home, and her salutary occupations. But she was soon to have her peace disturbed by pangs of the sincerest sorrow and regret—pangs which continued to be felt by her, after Lady Jane and even Percy had ceased to feel them. Mr Percy *did* live to see his son's sons, and to kiss with tears of pleasure the cheek of their happy mother; but he did not survive the birth of the heirs more than six weeks; and though apparently in perfect health, he died suddenly when getting off his horse, a victim as it appeared to some disease of the heart. As Percy equally loved and honored his father, his grief at first was overwhelmingly severe; and Lady Jane, though more relieved than affected by Percy's loss, shut herself up at home, contented to support her husband by her presence and soothing fondness under the violence of his sorrow; and Lady Anne, spite of herself, was forced to come to the house of mourning, to alleviate Percy's grief by the evident sincerity with which she shared in it. "You may well weep, dear Anne," said Lady Jane, "for he loved, he adored you above all women; and you will miss the pleasure of praise from lips from which approbation was honor!"

Lady Anne made no reply, for she felt that it was not natural for Lady Jane to deplore Mr Percy's death as much as she did, and she honored her integrity in not feigning what she did not feel. But Lady Anne only too soon learnt to deplore Mr Percy's sudden and untimely decease, on Lady Jane's account as well as her own, for she soon saw that he had been a check on Lady Jane's thoughtless expenditure.

As soon as propriety warranted her return into the gay world, Lady Jane, presuming on the addition to their income which Mr Percy's death occasioned, and unawed by the dread of his reproofs, launched forth into greater expenses than ever, and gave entertainments of almost eastern magnificence. Even Percy himself became alarmed; and as soon as Lady Jane found that, if informed of any intended decoration for an evening's fete, Percy positively and peremptorily forbade them, she got into a habit of giving her orders without consulting him; and when he expostulated, she always assured him that these decorations were only for effect, and that they really cost nothing worth mentioning; an assurance which she believed true, because, as she never looked at the bills, she was not aware how great was her extravagance. It was for the interest of his happiness that Percy should believe her statement, and he *did* believe it; while Lady Anne, awakened to anxious alarm, felt consoled for the removal of Mr Percy, by the sad conviction that a scene must soon be unfolded which would have filled him with sorrow and indignation. Afraid to speak, yet scarcely able to remain silent, Lady Anne therefore, whose lease of her house was now nearly expired, was no longer averse to reside with Percy and Lady Jane, for a short time at least, that she might be thereby enabled to have the means of judging accurately of what was passing, and she promised to remove to Piccadilly as soon as the term for which her house was taken had actually expired.

One morning that Lady Jane was to call on Lady Anne to go out with her on business, she arrived while the latter was engaged with her solicitor, and accordingly chose to wait in a small room on the ground-floor. In this room Lady Jane found a poor woman shabbily clothed, and her whole person and appearance indicative of poverty and distress. To the misery which she beheld, Lady Jane's heart was always vulnerable; and after surveying the poor woman at first in compassionate silence, she at length asked the cause of her evident unhappiness.

"O madam," she replied, "I am so wretched, and it

is all along of a great rich Lady who won't pay us our due, and so we fear we must go to the workhouse ; but, indeed, my Sam says he won't go there, but will run away and list for a sojer first, and then what is to become of me and my poor baby !”

“ You shall not go to the workhouse, I promise you that,” said Lady Jane. “ But who is this lady that will not pay you your just debts ? Surely, if she knew of your distress, she would ! It cannot be the lady of this house !”

“ She ! No, God bless her ! But, howsoever, there is no need to name names and make hinnemies, you know ; and if so be as she pay me at last, it is all very well, though to be sure as how I ha'n't slept for many a night from the thought of Sam's listing.”

“ Poor creature !” said Lady Jane affectionately. “ But Sam shall *not* list, I'll take care of that. But what is the debt ?”

“ O, madam, it is only 50*l.*”

“ No more ?”

“ Oh, and enough too for us poor folks to miss it. You see as how, madam, my husband work at a builder's, and this great lady wanted to have a tempry building run up for one of her feats ; but she grudged the money belike which my husband's master charged, and sure enough it was a great charge ! So what does my poor Sam do to turn a penny, but he follows the ladyship's agent out and says, says he, ‘ I would engage to do that job for much less. ’ ‘ Would you ? ’ says she ; and accordingly Sam was employed ; but by the time he had got the materials and all that, the job came to 50*l.* and he still was paid little or nothing for his trouble. Howsoever, the lady liked what he did ; though, after all, she never paid for it, and I never, no never, could get to the speech of her during this whole year.”

“ But has the lady no husband ? If she has, why not send the bill to him ?”

“ Oh, because she don't like her husband to know of her bills, and so her maid take 'em, and keep them for

fear the master get hold of them ; and so I can't get paid, and we must go to a workhouse, and Sam for a sojer ; not to mention a bad fever in the workhouse, and I am afflicted with a lungs cough."

"How dreadfully unprincipled this lady must be!" said Lady Jane. "But here, good woman, though I can but ill spare it, here are 20*l.* towards the 50*l.* and I dare say Lady Anne will give the rest."

The poor woman was so overjoyed that she could scarcely speak her thanks ; at length she said :

"But, dear lady, if the great lady will pay us our right, we need not take any from Lady Anne and you ; and I came here because they said she had such tie like over her, that she mayhap could prevail on her to pay us."

"How!" exclaimed Lady Jane, turning pale, "has Lady Anne such influence over the lady? What is your name?"

"Sarah Boddam."

"And the lady herself? answer me, I conjure you. Is it Lady Jane Percy?"

"That's she, sure enough." And Lady Jane, conscience stricken, sunk into a chair and hid her face in her hands.

"Dear me! what is the matter?" cried the poor woman approaching her. At this moment Lady Anne entered ; and surprised to see Lady Jane at all, as she had not been announced, and especially in that room, she was still more surprised to see her in evident agitation, and the poor woman in evident confusion.

"What does this mean?" cried Lady Anne. "Speak to me, dear Jane, and tell me what has happened ; is your husband, is Percy ill?"

The names of Jane and Percy showed the poor woman to whom she had been talking, and of whom complaining ; and frightened in the highest degree, she laid down the twenty pound notes, which she had now, she thought, little prospect of keeping, and was running out of the room, when Lady Jane exclaimed :

“Stay, I desire you ; stay where you are. Anne,” she added, “dear Anne, despise me if you will, but pay my debt to that poor wronged woman.”

“Oh dear, my lady, I am sure my lady, I did not think, and I can’t think—”

“Be silent, woman,” cried Lady Anne roughly, “and let one of you at least speak to be understood.”

While Lady Anne was thus speaking, Barnes came eagerly into the room, saying to Lady Jane, “Oh, my lady, Mrs Ellis has sent your new court dress after you, which Miss —— has sent home to know if she shall put more point and silver fringe on it?” and as she spoke she displayed the costly dress in all its extravagant beauty. Lady Anne, turning round, fixed her expressive eyes on the humbled and penitent Lady Jane, then said :

“Has your ladyship any fresh orders to give?”

“No, no, lay the dress down, Barnes, I will call and speak about it,” replied Lady Jane ; while the poor woman, gazing with surprise at splendor such as she had never seen before, wondered no longer that Lady Jane could not pay her bills.

“To be as concise as possible, Lady Anne,” said Lady Jane in a voice of suppressed agitation, “that poor woman and her husband have been driven to the greatest distress, and to the prospect of a workhouse, by my not paying them a bill of 50*l*. Pay it, and save me from their curses and my own !”

“Oh dear ! my lady, I am sure I should not have cursed you, my lady.”

“Peace, woman ! I tell you,” cried Lady Anne angrily. “We ought to curse no one ;—still I could almost forgive the sufferers by the vices of the *Great*, as they call the rich and the noble, and as we call ourselves, if in the bitterness of their hearts, they *did* curse the thoughtless extravagance which, itself unchastised, drives them often to a workhouse and a prison.”

“You are severe, Anne.”

“May be, but I am just.”

“Dear me, my lady!” again observed Mrs Boddam, “the lady looks so sorry and so ashamed that I could not have the heart to—”

“Must I again desire to hear none of your remarks! They fret me beyond my patience. Here, I will write you a draft on my banker for the money directly. There—take it, and begone!” And while the terrified woman, with a thousand curtsies and thanks, and even tears of joy came up to Lady Anne to receive the draft, Lady Jane said, “Really, Anne, your words are so rough, and your manner so violent, you alarm the poor woman.”

“My words are rough, but my actions kind,” she replied. “Your words are kind, but your actions cruel. I wonder which, in the eyes of God or man is the more estimable.”

The conscious Lady Jane did not attempt to reply.

The good woman waited till Lady Anne had done speaking, to make her last curtsy; to which Lady Anne replied by a kind nod of the head; then calling after her, she said—

“Be sure to tell the servant to write down where you are to be found, in case I wish to inquire after you.”

Mrs Boddam, whose fear of Lady Anne, had not power to overcome her gratitude, turned on her eyes so full of joy and grateful emotion, that Lady Anne too much affected to speak, again nodded adieu, and shutting the door returned to the wretched and self-convicted Lady Jane, who relieved her feelings a little, by relating to Lady Anne the whole of what had passed while Lady Anne was preparing for the projected drive.

“Well, Jane,” said Lady Anne, kindly forbearing to dwell on the repented fault, “shall we go first to Miss ——’s about the dress?”

“Name it not,” cried Lady Jane, “I shall never be able to bear the sight of it again, and if I go it shall only be to beg *her* to dispose of it.—I cannot, *indeed* I cannot, incur the guilt of buying it now, or rather of running in debt for it,—and I know Lady Laurel would gladly purchase it.”

"If you really *wish* to part with it," said Lady Anne kindly, "you need not wait Lady Laurel's decision,—for I will purchase it."

"You! Anne, you!"

"Yes—I;—for I mean to go to court on the birthday."

"But it will be too *short* for you!"

"Oh! Barnes can lengthen it. Therefore if you are in earnest, the dress is mine, and shall be paid for to-day; and if you think more point and silver necessary, you shall give your orders accordingly, for I wish to have it as handsome as it can be made."

"If I am in earnest! To be sure I am;—and I, yes I will go in an old dress." And the sigh she gave while speaking these words sufficiently proved that she felt the sacrifice she was making.—Lady Anne kindly praised her resolution, and they set off for Miss ——'s; where such additions were made to the dress as Lady Jane recommended, and Lady Anne, seemingly delighted with her purchase, returned home in unusual spirits.

At length the birth-day arrived; and Lady Jane, having made an old court-dress as smart as she could, was preparing to put it on; when Lady Anne, dressed in a simple white crape with a white satin train, and all its ornaments, pearls and white roses, entered her apartment, ready for court, and, dismissing Ellis, spoke to the astonished Lady Jane as follows;—"I have tried your resolution, dearest Jane, on a point in which it has usually been most vulnerable, and I have seen with delight that it has stood the trial nobly.—You have now for ONCE practised the virtue of self-denial, and I flatter myself that the pleasure which has been the result to you from the consciousness of your firmness will tempt you to the exertion of similar forbearance in future. But as all virtue is the more stable, I believe, for being propped with rewards and praises, I must tell you I never thought of purchasing the dress for myself, but as a present for you, and you will see it lying on your own bed ready to be put on."

Perhaps Lady Jane had never known a much happier moment! She, even she, had earned the most rich and beautiful dress she had ever fancied, by an act of self-denial. But, in a different way, Lady Anne was as much pleased as Lady Jane; and it was with hearts full of renewed and even strengthened affection towards each other that they proceeded to St James's. But, alas! all Lady Jane's good feelings were evanescent, and her repentance only bloomed like the gum cistus, that sheds its leaves almost as soon as they are blown, and Lady Anne's hopes of her amendment were again blighted.

Yes; Mr Percy was indeed a restraint on the extravagance of Lady Jane; and she proved that he had been so, by prevailing on her indulgent husband to make great and unnecessary alterations in the seat belonging to the family, as soon as his father's death made him possessor of that venerable mansion. Percy thought, indeed, that the house which had suited his noble and exemplary mother might have satisfied the pride and the taste of his wife; but the yieldingness of his temper, assisted by the natural indolence of his disposition, and that unuttered but conscious sentiment which I believe has ruined many wives, "any thing for a quiet life," made Percy submit to what he did not approve. And in a short time after Mr Percy was no more, the house at Percy Park was filled with workmen, who were going to modernize entirely that side of it which commanded the south-west, and a beautiful plain watered by a meandering stream, which stream was now to roll along a widely spreading river; but the other side, which looked on rocks and mountains, and frowned in castellated grandeur, was allowed to retain its gloomy antiquity.

"Yes, Anne," said Lady Jane to her cousin, who was alarmed at the idea of these changes, both from principle and taste, "you need not fear; I mean to keep the grand, but add the agreeable;—in short, I mean that one side of my house should resemble *you*, and the other *me*. Agreeable in every sense of the word will I endeavor to render my mansion both inside and out; books,



statues, paintings, gems, and medals shall crowd the modern part of the edifice ;—and here shall

—from the mould to conscious being start  
 † Those finer forms, the miracles of art ;  
 Here chosen gems imprint on sulphur shine,  
 That slept for ages in a second mine ;

and here—

—————its warmest hues the pencil flings,  
 Lo ! here the lost restores, the absent brings,  
 And still the few best loved, and most revered,  
 Rise round the board their social smile endear'd,"

added Lady Jane, leading Lady Anne to the dining-room, which was already hung with portraits by the first artists. " Now follow me to the library," she exclaimed, " Here shall I

—while the shaded lamp's mild lustre streams,  
 Read ancient books, or wo-inspiring dreams ;  
 And when a sage's bust arrests me here,  
 Pause, and his features with his thoughts compare.  
 Ah ! most that art my grateful rapture calls  
 Which breathes a soul into the silent walls,  
 Which gathers round the will of every tongue,  
 All on whose words departed nations hung,  
 Still prompt to charm with many a converse sweet,  
 Guides in the world, companions in retreat."\*

" Well but, dear Jane," observed Lady Anne, " could you not have dined in the dining-room as it was before, and having your friends around you, without these expensive alterations ? Could you not have read in the study such as our dear guardian left it ?"

" Why to be sure I could, when hungry, eat in a room however ugly ; when studious, I could read in a library however untastily fitted up ; but no rooms are the worse for being fashioned by the hand of Taste."

" No ; the rooms, Jane, will not be the worse, but their owners may ; for Taste is always followed by its evil genius ' Expense. '

" Its evil genius, Anne ? No, not so, when wealth and power warrant its attendance on Taste."

\* In all the lines quoted by Lady Jane on this occasion, see " Roger's epistle to a Friend."

“True, but——”

“Nay, nay—no buts, most beautiful Mentor! for, remember, in all that I am now doing I have my husband’s approbation.”

This was indeed true, and Percy was charmed and gratified when he beheld the result of Lady Jane’s creative taste; while even Lady Anne smiled with admiring wonder, as she surveyed the beauties it had imparted, when all the decorations were completely finished. But neither Lady Anne nor Percy continued to smile when the bills came in, and Lady Jane herself was startled and alarmed when she found that the expenditure was more than double the estimate! Nor did the expense stop there. As Lady Jane had contrived a music-room, she must have concerts; and during the four months which they passed at Percy Park, musical professors must be there as their guests. As she had erected a room which could be converted into a private theatre, she must have private theatricals, and Percy found that, whether in town or country, expenditure of a most enormous nature attended him from night till morning, as the Furies on the persecuted Orestes. Still he was not much distressed, because he knew that his income was equal to all his apparent expenses; but had he been aware that Lady Jane’s expenses which he did not know, were equal to those with which he was acquainted, he would indeed have lost all peace of mind, and have been roused to exertions of authority, which would have checked, though they would not probably have cured her thoughtless extravagance. Still, though Percy did not find in the country the retirement which he sought, he loved the months which he passed at Percy Park, because he had there more enjoyment of his wife’s and children’s society; for Lady Jane, though she could not give up the dear delight of reigning as mistress of the revels in the country, and displaying her fine taste in festal decorations, had the good feeling and the grateful affection, whatever guests she had at her house, to devote her whole mornings to her husband; and all the hours which

intervened from the time when she rose to that when she retired to dress for dinner, she spent in walking, riding, driving, or reading with Percy.

At length Lady Anne, having been seduced by the love almost maternal, which she began to feel for the children, and by the hope of being some restraint on the errors of Lady Jane, to consent finally to become their guest, for some months at least, was, when those months were at an end, persuaded to stay still longer. But though the first months of her stay with them were pleasant, she soon found that the ensuing ones would make her continued residence not only painful but improper; it was also soon evident to her that Lady Jane was not only unhappy, but that something weighed heavily on her mind, and she could not but attribute it to her being again deeply involved in debt, from which she was resolved that she would not even attempt to free her. Besides, like all persons displeased with *themselves*, Lady Jane was captious and irascible with *others*; and very often, when Lady Anne had not the remotest idea of adverting to such a subject, she would accuse her of reproaching her with the obligations she had conferred on her. But it was not the pains so much as the pleasures of residing under her cousin's roof, that determined the conscientious Lady Anne to quit it. Percy, since Lady Anne became their guest, had found her conversation so pleasant, and was so gratified by the evident interest which she took in his success as an orator, and the every day increasing fame which he acquired, that, instead of accompanying Lady Jane to dinner parties, he more than once preferred dining at home with Lady Anne (who rarely dined out) and his little boys, who, now three years old, were permitted to dine at table with their mamma Anne, or rather ate *their supper* while she dined; and it was always very reluctantly that Percy left his home, thus rendered agreeable to him in a more domestic way than it had lately been by Lady Jane, even to repair to the House, and pursue the line of life which he so warmly loved.

Nor was it long before Lady Jane became alarmed at the evident delight he took in her cousin's society ; for her good sense taught her that beauty, and even that power of attraction which Percy denominated charm, must lose its influence by custom over any husband however fond ; unless its sway be maintained by solid and superior qualities of mind and heart, which, like pure gold on which enamel has been worked, retain their value when the enamel is worn away. She was only conscious that, if compared to Lady Anne, she must shine with diminished lustre in Percy's eyes ; and she was also conscious that, though enamel might very well represent *her*, Lady Anne was better designated by sterling gold. Besides, she thought, and justly too, that Lady Anne if conscious that she pleased, would in time study to be pleasing ; and Percy himself had said, that if Lady Anne would but condescend to be agreeable, she would be irresistible—" and alas ! " cried Lady Jane, " have I not obscured all my graces in the eyes of my husband, by errors which not even the most partial fondness can excuse ? "

While these saddening thoughts were passing in Lady Jane's mind, Lady Anne was calling herself to a strict account for the delight her thoughts afforded her. She could not but feel, and the consciousness was delightful to her, that Percy took greater pleasure in her society than in that of any one, and this she considered as an injury to Lady Jane.—" Well then, it shall, it must be relinquished," thought Lady Anne ; but aware that, if she lived in London, he would be perhaps her most frequent visiter, she resolved to give up all idea of fixing her future establishment in London, and secretly gave orders to have a fine old castle in Wales, which she inherited in right of her mother, got ready for her reception. " Again," said she to herself, " the hall of my fathers shall resound to the loud welcome of hospitality, and the harp shall awaken the echoes of its walls ; " but she sighed to think that she must leave the lovely children behind her ; might she be permitted to take little Harry Percy with her, she should be contented ; nay more, she would

be happy ! But she still kept her plans unrevealed, lest she should be exposed to solicitations to alter them, which, as she knew they would be unavailing, it would be irksome to her to hear.

In the meantime Lady Jane continued to run her giddy career, while though she still was the object of Percy's love, she every day diminished in his esteem. One day, while Lady Anne was sitting with Lady Jane in her dressing-room, Percy came in with an air and manner considerably agitated ; and while Lady Jane with a wife's conscious right could ask what had so evidently disturbed him, Lady Anne, though equally anxious, could only dare to look the anxiety which she felt.

"Do you ask what *ails* me, Jane?" said Percy. "Then I will tell you ; but I already feel that I am a fool to be so disturbed ; the truth is, that I came suddenly upon your maid Ellis, as she was reading a long paper which I took for a bill, and which, seeing me, she tried in great confusion to put in her pocket. Alarmed at this, and rendered suspicious by former occurrences, I sternly demanded what it was she was so eager to conceal ? on which, she blushing and stammering replied, Sir, it is sir, a letter from a young man who is with the armies ;" and I let her depart unquestioned further ; but she might or she might *not* speak truth ; however, I was willing to hope the *first*." Here he paused, checked by the pale cheek, the downcast eye of his conscious wife.

"I know," said the equally alarmed Lady Anne, "that Ellis has a lover with the armies."

"Has she?" returned Percy eagerly. "Thank you ! God bless you for that assurance, kind Lady Anne !"

"I see you are very suspicious now, Percy," said Lady Jane faintly.

"But still, dear Jane, tell me if I have not an excuse for being so.—O believe me, to be able to confide implicitly in your prudence is the dearest wish of my soul ; and I do, indeed I do, frequently repeat to myself—'No, let me not distrust her ; she cannot be so cruel, she cannot be so base, or so ungrateful to her noble

minded cousin, to go on as she formerly did ; she loves me too well, and Lady Anne too well ; nor would she bear to run even the risk, which she would do, of losing——.”

“ Of losing what ? ” asked Lady Jane.

“ Of losing me and my affections for ever ; for were you, best beloved of my heart as you now are, to involve yourself, and consequently me, in pecuniary embarrassments again, I would, though my heart bled with pity and tenderness at every pore, I would cease to live with you, and separate from you for ever ! ”

So saying, pale and agitated as Lady Jane herself, he suddenly and hastily left the room.

“ Then I am lost ! ” cried Lady Jane, throwing herself back on a sofa, and clasping her hands in agony.

“ Lost ! say you ? ” exclaimed Lady Anne with more indignation than tenderness, “ can it indeed be true that you have deserved the sad penalty which your husband has threatened you with ? ”

“ It is indeed true,” she replied, “ that I have incurred fresh debts ; and unless you can and will assist me,” she added with an agony of tears, and catching Lady Anne’s hand, “ you will soon see Percy wretched, and me not only an outcast from his affections but his roof.”

Lady Anne indignantly withdrew her hand, regarding her guilty cousin with looks of angry contempt. Lady Jane felt them to the bottom of her heart ; while pride, and that pettishness the result of conscious degradation, prompted her to reply.

“ Well, Lady Anne, if nothing less than my being punished for my faults by the loss of my husband’s love and protection will satisfy your rigid ideas of retributive justice, be it so.—Yet I would advise your ladyship to scrutinize accurately your own motives for this rejection of the prayer of my misery. Take care lest it be because the idea of my losing the heart of Percy is an agreeable one to your imagination, and therefore you wish it to be realized.”

“ Fallen as you were before in my esteem,” replied

Lady Anne with one of her most haughty and contemptuous looks, "this speech has sunk you still lower; but I am not to be frightened, by the dread of incurring your mean suspicions, into an action which my judgment may condemn; nor can any consideration for myself, Lady Jane, impel me to what I look upon as wrong conduct. Had you, madam, endeavored to move my feelings by picturing to me your own probable misery, and the anguish of your husband when your unworthiness shall be made known to him, you would have succeeded better."

Long before Lady Anne had done speaking, the self-judged Lady Jane had felt every sensation of pride vanish into humility almost amounting to abjectness; and when she had finished speaking she sunk on her knees before her justly offended cousin, and begged her to forgive the petulance of a self-convicted and desperate woman.

"And is it the envied wife of Percy whom I behold thus desperate and thus degraded!" thought Lady Anne; "she, who might have been the happiest of the happy. . . . ."

"Rise, Lady Jane," said Lady Anne, "nor add such base self-humiliation to the faults already committed. Your present words, your looks, are more calculated certainly to affect me than your former ones, and have almost conquered my repugnance to squander on you, and the payment of the debts of extravagant profligacy, the money which would, either lent or given to honest industrious tradesmen, have saved them from ruin, or have laid the foundation of their future independence. O God of benevolence and justice," she added, clasping her hands and raising her eyes to heaven, "how can I answer to thee this waste of thy indulgent bounty!"

"Is there no ruin," answered Lady Jane, (who like all persons accustomed to be in debt and to borrow money, had lost all feelings of delicacy,) "is there no ruin but ruin in trade that it would be virtue to prevent? Is not the ruin of a friend's peace of mind, of a relation's fair fame, entitled to equal if not superior consideration? Can you without horror recollect the dreadful state of

agitation in which your and my beloved Percy left the room, only on the bare *suggestion* of what will soon be a reality? Can you bear to dwell on the image of this house deprived of its mistress by the publication of her errors? and Percy of the wife who, perhaps, even spite of her faults, he may cherish in the recesses of his heart? Can you bear to fancy me, your once loved Jane, the companion of your youth, wearing away the rest of life in retirement, which the pangs of conscious degradation will forbid me either to enjoy, or to improve; while I every day undermine that life of misery, by having recourse to opiates to suspend my sense of suffering? Oh! Lady Anne, if your timely assistance could prevent the realization of this picture, would it not be as great an act of benevolence to afford it for that purpose, as to aid one tradesman or make the fortune of another?"

Lady Anne shuddered while she listened to her; for she well knew that the picture now only the creature of imagination, might only too soon become a reality; and after communing with herself some time in silence, she at last said, "I have at this moment in my banker's hands a pretty considerable sum; it was destined for other purposes; but if this sum can be of use in removing your embarrassments, and preserving you and Percy from the horrors you have described and I foresee, it is at your service; but—" Here Lady Jane interrupted her by clamorous expressions of gratitude, and an embrace which Lady Anne as yet could not prevail on herself to return.

"Don't interrupt me," said Lady Anne; "I wish to tell you that *more* I cannot, *will* not do; and if you are ever involved again, you must take the consequences of your own actions, and, however reluctantly, disclose all to your husband. My paternal estates are, you know, entailed on the male heir; but I have the fee of those which I derive from my mother; and I can, if I choose, sell or do what I please with one of them; but this I will not do, for the sake of one very dear to me. The elder of your twins, Lionel Percy, must be a rich man, while



the younger can only inherit a younger brother's fortune. But as I positively shall never marry, I mean to adopt the little Harry, and for him preserve my landed property inviolate; I mean, with your and his father's approbation."

"Our approbation, Anne! And can you suppose that we shall withhold it, even at the risk of your one day changing your mind and marrying?"

"Marrying! No—that I shall never do. Now let me tell you my plans; instead of having an establishment in London, it is my intention to reside, probably all the year round, at a castle I have in Wales, and I this day received a letter from my agent to say that it is ready for me; and I have also a letter from my relation Mrs Tyrawley, telling me that she and her daughter will most gladly accept my invitation to live with me, and they will meet me at my new residence next week."

"Next week!" exclaimed Lady Jane; "and will you indeed leave me, and so soon?" while the consciousness that ere long she would require Lady Anne to stand between her and her husband's anger, shook her whole frame with evident emotion.

"I am resolved," said Lady Anne; "a London life does not suit me; to me it is heartless all; and though I occasionally meet at your parties, and at others, such society as it is both instructive and honorable to be one of, still these happy evenings are the few, and insipid ones the many; but in my new abode I shall have rational pursuits, leisure to follow them, and active duties to fulfil; a numerous tenantry to make happy; and I shall be able to witness the happiness which I promote."

"But in the meanwhile you will leave your adopted son!"

"Aye, that will be a pang, but——"

"But what? would you have us resign him to you?"

"Oh! mock me not with a thought so blissful!"

"Nay, Anne, whatever it costs me, if Percy will consent and you will go, the little Harry shall go with you;" and Lady Anne's heart being by this means softened to—

wards her cousin she threw herself on her neck and warmly articulated her thanks. Lady Anne, though she loved home, doted on Harry Percy, perhaps because his name was Harry, and she also saw in him a likeness of his father; and to be able, while avoiding on principle further association with the father, to recompense herself by being of use to the son, was an idea so full of exquisite enjoyment, that Lady Anne could not thank Lady Jane enough for having given it utterance, and promised to give it substance.

Not to dwell on this subject, in a few days all was ready for Lady Anne's departure, and Percy consented that little Harry should go with her, and be in future her adopted child! But so great was the sorrow he expressed at the idea of parting with Lady Anne as well as Harry, that Lady Jane could not help rejoicing, regardless of her own involvements, that she was going away.

At length the carriage, a new and handsome one, drawn by four horses, and attended by two outriders in the Mortimer livery, drew up to the door, followed by an elegant little phaeton with four post horses; and for the first time since she came of age the daughter of the Marquis of D—— had an equipage suited to her rank in life.

"Do, Jane," said Percy, "come to the window, and look at your cousin's new carriages. This is as it should be, Lady Anne. How pleased my poor father would have been to see this day!"

This speech though not meant as such, Lady Jane could not help taking as a reproach to her, whose extravagance had caused Lady Anne's economy, and instead of going to the window she burst into tears. But Percy, attributing her emotions to sorrow at parting with Lady Anne, and a consequent dislike to see the carriage which was to convey her away, sat down by her, and affectionately assured her he sympathized with her most sincerely in her grief at losing her cousin. At this moment the little Harry was led in by his attendant; and Percy, with a quivering lip, took him in his arms and

kissed his happy face, radiant with the expected delight of riding in a carriage along with dear mamma Anne.

"Take him, he is yours, dear Lady Anne," said Percy, giving him to her arms; "and to no one less beloved, less honored, would I entrust a charge so precious."

Percy's manner was solemn, and Lady Anne caught its solemnity; for, catching the child to her bosom, she raised her fine eyes as if calling on heaven to witness her engagement to do her utmost duty by the child so committed to her care, and bowed her head on his, in order to express the pleased acquiescence which she could not trust her voice to articulate.

"Yes, dear Lady Anne," continued he, "the child is yours; and if you make him in any degree resemble you, he will be all a father's heart can wish him."

"Come, let us go," said the child, interrupting the general silence of emotion, "Harry wants to go ride with mamma Anne."

"Little wretch!" said Lady Jane, "he is not at all sorry to leave me. Harry are you not vexed to leave poor mamma Jane?"

"No, no—I like to go with mamma Anne; but we come again to see you, shan't we, Anne?"

"At least we hope mamma Jane will come and see us."

"Yes, yes—mamma Jane come to us. Good bye, Jane," holding up his pretty mouth to her.

Lady Jane clasped him in her arms, weeping even to sobbing as she did so.

"We had better go and not prolong this painful scene," said Lady Anne, herself visibly affected; and having clasped her cousin in a long and affectionate embrace, she gave her hand to Percy and in a short time found herself in the carriage; while Percy, taking the child from his attendant's arms, kissed him for the last time, and, without uttering a word, saw the carriages drive off. That evening, Lady Jane's spirits were so depressed from the loss of her cousin and her child, that she gave up three engagements, and stayed at home with

her husband, in whose eyes she consequently looked more amiable than she had done for many months.

Lady Anne meanwhile, was on her journey into Caernarvonshire, and much happier than she had been for some time. Percy had confided his child to her care, desiring her to make him all a father's heart could wish by *making him like herself*; and Lady Anne could not help giving herself up to all the delight this idea occasioned her. Lady Anne, when she approached Green Rock, the name of her castle, found that she had judged right in coming to it with a splendid equipage, as her tenants would have been disappointed if she had done otherwise; for they all came out to meet her in their best apparel, to welcome her to the abode of her ancestors. Mrs Tyrawley and her daughter were waiting also to receive her, and what with the pleasure and gratitude they expressed at being invited to live under her roof, the delight of the child at the horses and their riders, and the harpers raising the strain of welcome in the grand hall of entrance, the beauty of the country, and the fineness of the weather, Lady Anne felt an almost overpowering sensation of pleasure, and a scarcely defined wish to live and die where she was.

In a short time the Tyrawleys had their suite of rooms allotted to them, and Lady Anne hers; and Lady Anne began the education of little Harry Percy. She had taken, while in Clarges-street, an instructor in the Latin language, the rudiments of which her father had taught her, and she succeeded in learning enough of Latin to enable her to be of great use to her young charge; but finding that the village curate was learned, virtuous, and poor, she hired him, at a salary double that which he asked, to assist her in educating her adopted son; while Miss Tyrawley, who had once been a governess in a family that had travelled and resided abroad, undertook to teach him meanwhile as much as should be necessary of French and Italian.

While the little Harry, now four years old, was taught useful and regular habits of application, his health and

Lady Anne's too were much improved by daily exercise ; and every morning before breakfast Lady Anne and Harry breathed the fine air of the mountains, and returned to breakfast blooming as the natives themselves. Indeed, now she had an object on whom her affections could with propriety be placed, and all the benevolent usefulness of her nature exercised, Lady Anne was become a different being, and she resembled Gray's description of "Cheerfulness"

"——— a nymph of healthiest hue,  
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew ;"

while the hours, which during her residence at Lady Jane's had hung occasionally so heavily on her hands, now flew with incredible rapidity. When she had been at Green Rock three months Percy came down for a few days, and was charmed to see his child grown and improved both in mind and body, even in that short time ; and when he departed he expressed his hope of bringing Lady Jane down when the London season was over ; and Lady Anne's delicacy and judgment were better satisfied with the prospect of seeing him accompanied by Lady Jane, than they had been by his visiting Green Rock alone.

When Percy returned to London, Lady Jane was pained, though pleased, to hear with what delight he spoke of his visit, and of the improvement visible already in his little boy ; and she took occasion to observe, that it would be a pity a woman so calculated to undertake the education of children should not herself be a wife and a mother.

"She will be both, I hope and trust," said Percy eagerly, "one day or other, for I do not mind her resolutions to the contrary."

"And do you *really* wish Lady Anne to marry ?" as eagerly returned his wife.

"To be sure I do. Can you think so meanly of me, as to suppose that any consideration for my child's interest could make me so base as to wish Lady Anne not to fill that situation for which her virtues qualify her ?"

Lady Jane had *no such* meaning; but she had no objection to Percy's remaining ignorant what her real meaning was; and assuring him that she spoke without much thought, she left him to dress for a party, a good deal relieved by the assurance that he did wish Lady Anne to marry.

Three months after this, Percy entered Lady Jane's dressing room one morning with a strong expression of pleasure on his countenance, which he explained by telling her, that by a letter from his solicitor he learnt he had recovered for him a debt of several thousand pounds which his father had given up for lost. But Lady Jane's pleasure at this intelligence was completely destroyed by what followed; "therefore," added Percy, "I shall be able to fulfil my poor mother's wishes, which were, that I should sue for a barony that is in her family; her family being, though not as old and noble as my father's, a very respectable one, with a title in abeyance. I know that it will cost me some thousands to succeed; but my right is indisputable; and though I should grieve much to leave the Lower House, it is on my conscience to try to get into the Upper one. Therefore this money comes to whet my almost blunted purpose. But what is the matter, Jane? you seem going to faint!" And so she was, so much had Percy's intentions overset her. But Percy attributing her illness to her situation, which she had just disclosed to him, suspected not that it originated in a moral cause, and after seeing her a little revived he left her to the care of Ellis.

As soon as he was gone, she gave way to the utmost violence of despair, and shutting herself up alone she paced the room in almost frenzied violence; for, having lately prevailed on herself to look over the bills which Ellis had brought her, she had convinced herself that at least two thirds of the money that Percy had recovered would be necessary to discharge her debts, which must soon be disclosed, although the sum given her by Lady Anne had served to pacify some of the most clamorous creditors. Could she then be so treacherous and base as

to allow Percy to enter into the expenses of law proceedings, when she well knew he would be distressed for money to defray them? No; she could be extravagant, and even viciously prodigal; but she could not so far betray the confidence of a generous husband; and she resolved therefore, though at the certain risk of being, as she told Lady Anne, "not only an outcast from Percy's affections, but from his roof also," to confess the whole of her delinquency, and show him the necessity of appropriating his thousands, not in the acquisition of new honors to himself, but in preserving some little reputation of common honesty to *her*. But how could she endure to meet his agonies and his resentment upon the first disclosure? She could not do it, and therefore resolved to write the disclosure, and set off unknown to him for Lady Anne's abode, there to remain till the first storm of his feelings had subsided, and to await there his final decision respecting her future destination; for, after what he had said, she had no idea that he would doom her to a less punishment than banishment. Accordingly, after a night of wretchedness, passed on pretence of illness in a separate apartment from her husband, Lady Jane arranged every thing for her departure with Ellis, her unavoidable confidante. As soon therefore as Percy went out on his usual morning walk, the letter of disclosure was laid on the table in his library. Then telling the servants she was going out for a drive into the country, Lady Jane and Ellis got into a post chaise, without the former's having dared to trust herself to see her little Lionel, and she desired the postillion to drive in the exact contrary direction to Wales; but in the next street she gave different orders, and arrived in a frame of mind the most pitiable at the end of the first stage on the road to Green Rock. Here, though very ill, she took fresh horses and proceeded; but at the end of the second stage she was too unwell to go on, and before night she had symptoms of fever.

Percy meanwhile had been unavoidably detained from home till a late hour, and on his return his first question was, "How is your lady?"

"My lady is very well, I believe, sir," said the servants, "for her ladyship and Ellis are gone out in a post chaise to drive into the country."

"In a post chaise! Why not in the carriage?" cried Percy. But recollecting himself, he concluded that Lady Jane was gone on some errand of charity, and did not choose to be known, and void of all alarm he entered his library; nor, though he saw a letter there directed to him in Lady Jane's own hand, did he believe it was any thing more than an explanation of her errand into the country with Ellis. His surprise and his misery therefore were unspeakable when he read the letter, and found that Lady Jane had withdrawn herself from his resentment. "But she has done *wisely*," said he, "and I thank her; for, had I seen her in the first transports of my just resentment, I might perhaps have reproached her too bitterly."

That livelong night he passed in sleepless wretchedness; but when morning dawned he had contrived to think himself into more composure; for he had taught himself to set against her guilt in incurring so vast a debt, her generosity in avowing it, in order to prevent his commencing a suit, of which it would not be in his power to pay the unavoidable expenses; "And she did it too," said he, "though at the risk of losing me forever! There was virtue in that, and perhaps she is not wholly irreclaimable. Perhaps, if I treat her with lenity, I shall *shame* her into reformation; and her generous nature, for generous it certainly is, will be piqued into a requital of my kindness by abstaining from evil in future."

It was Percy's *own* generous nature that spoke; and having resolved to listen to it, he went to bed, and to sleep. At eight he awoke, resolved to go in pursuit of his wife; for, though she told the driver in hearing of the servants to go to such a place, he had no doubt but she was gone to Lady Anne; and by nine o'clock the next day he was on the road to Green Rock, and in a post-chaise by himself, that the servants might know nothing of what had passed; and he took care to inform them before he dismissed them the preceding evening, that he



had found a letter from Lady Jane informing him that she should not return for a day or two.

When he reached the inn where Lady Jane had been forced to stop, he got out while they were changing horses, and he saw a female resembling Ellis going up stairs with a phial in her hand. He immediately followed, and overtaking her, received the painful intelligence that her lady was in one of the chambers in an alarming state of indisposition brought on by wretchedness of mind. In an instant away fled all his projected reproaches, all idea of meeting her coldly, and all the angry dignity of an offended husband, which he had resolved to assume when they met. Jane, his adored Jane, ill, perhaps dying, at an obscure inn on the road, was the image uppermost in his mind, and he insisted on following Ellis to the bedside of the invalid. He did so; and Ellis had scarcely said "My lady! here's my master!" when Lady Jane felt herself in the arms of her husband, and his tears trickling on her neck.

"This is too much; too much goodness, too much happiness!" she exclaimed. It was indeed! happiness beyond what her merits deserved, and beyond what it was *now* in her power to enjoy. "I will make no promises of amendment," cried she mournfully to Percy, "I *dare* not, for I distrust myself."

"I hail what you have now said," replied Percy, "as a better omen of amendment than fifty promises would have been; and from this moment, my beloved, only remember the past sufficiently to warn you against the temptations of the future!"

Lady Jane blessed him for his goodness, and tried to be cheerful; but her body as well as her mind was suffering; and the medical attendant whom the alarmed Ellis had called in, assured Percy, that if the lady were to travel immediately he could not answer for the consequences. In three days time, however, she was able to be removed, and Percy proposed, that instead of returning to town they should proceed to Green Rock and surprise Lady Anne. Accordingly, Ellis was sent to London

by a coach that passed the inn door, and Lady Jane and Percy were to go on in a post-chaise to the next stage, there to remain till Ellis returned with Lionel in their own travelling carriage. In two days time they reached Green Rock, not without Lady Jane's having experienced excessive alarm from the badness of the roads. But the welcome which they received from Lady Anne, and the sight of her child looking so healthy and so well, banished for a time all painful sensations from Lady Jane's mind; and while she saw with rapture the joy expressed by the twins at meeting, and the pleasure Harry took in showing Lionel all his new toys, new books, and pretty garden, Lady Jane felt that dissipation and all its gaieties had nothing to give equal to the pure pleasure she at that moment experienced, and she believed herself capable of living in future for the enjoyments of the affections alone. But other thoughts, of a far less pleasant nature, soon obtruded themselves on her mind; and though she had had so recent a proof of the fondness which Percy felt towards her, still she could not contemplate the now brilliant beauty of Lady Anne, which formed a complete contrast to her own sunk eyes, hollow cheeks, and artificial complexion, without feelings of jealousy and alarm; especially as Lady Anne never spoke without rivetting Percy's attention on all that she uttered.

I have known envious and jealous women more than once express the jealousy they could not conceal, but in a way to render it unsuspected by superficial observers; for they have *seemed* to express it as a *joke*, though they themselves knew the feeling to be a sad *reality*; while the unsuspecting hearers considered as a piece of playful good humor, what was in fact of a very different description. Lady Jane, taught by the same consciousness, had the same way of venting it as those women had—and one day after dinner she began thus; “Pray, Mr Percy, how old do you think Lady Anne was last birth-day?—I should think about seventeen by her look, should not *you?*”

“Thereabouts,” replied Percy, gazing with admiration

on Lady Anne, whose cheek, before glowing with perfect health, now bloomed with the blush of modesty.

"I protest I will not stay here—for I look so old and so ugly by you, Lady Anne, that I can't bear the sight of myself. Besides, if I do stay, I shall hate you cordially; for it is quite out of the question you know, Mrs Tyrawley, for a faded fashionable belle to bear the sight of a young beauty like Lady Anne, quite in her prime!"

"Your ladyship is joking," replied Mrs Tyrawley; "for I think, if I recollect right, that you are a year younger than Lady Anne?"

"Aye, according to age,—but what am I in look, in health, and even in feelings? I am sure Lady Anne might say with more propriety than Monsieur de Coulanges did when he writes to Madame de Sevigne, 'qu' a coup sur on a commis quelque grosse erreur de date dans son acte de bapteme.'"

"Jane, Jane, be quiet," cried Percy smiling, "you make Lady Anne blush."

"Hold your tongue, foolish man! I know what I am saying; and do you really believe in your silly heart, that Anne is not woman enough to be pleased with being complimented on her good looks?"

"No; a few compliments on her looks may be pleasing to any woman, even to a Lady Anne Mortimer; and so are a few gentle coaxings on the back to a cat; but if long continued they become painful and irritating, and so is prolonged flattery to a modest woman."

"There, Percy! who has made Lady Anne blush now? and O how I triumph! I have effected my wishes; for, by dint of blushing, as I have often seen happen to her before, her color is become purple and coarse, and I should not be ashamed now to show my genteeler face by the side of hers. Trust me, I know how to destroy a rival beauty. And now, Anne, that you are no longer so intolerably handsome, I feel friendly towards you again, and will not go away till *tomorrow*."

Mrs Tyrawley and her daughter, and even Percy, thought all this was mere *badinage*; but it was a real

transcript of her feelings, and the flushed cheek and therefore diminished beauty of Lady Anne imparted to her in truth the pleasure which she expressed.

The next day, and the next, and the next to that, were days of variety, and therefore of pleasure to Lady Jane. But when she had heard all Miss Tyrawley had seen abroad, and Mrs Tyrawley at home; had witnessed the wonderful improvement in reading of the little Harry, and seen, not without much pain, that Lionel was a dunce to him; had been waited upon by all the neighbors; had become acquainted with all the drives and all the walks; she sighed to return to London, and was very glad to hear Percy say that he must return to his parliamentary duties; and the next day witnessed the preparations for their departure.

While Lady Jane and Lady Anne were sitting alone together in the drawing-room, and the twins were playing beside them, Lady Jane catching Harry in her arms, and violently kissing him, said, "Come, dear boy, get on your hat and coat, for you shall go back to London with us and Lionel."

"That I won't," said the boy, struggling to get away from her.

"O yes! you shall—To be sure you love me, Harry?"

"Yes, I love you, but not so well as mamma Anne."

"No! Still, when I tell you I wish you to come and live with me again, to be sure you will?"

"No; I tell you I won't!" cried the boy.

"Aye! but you must," said Lady Jane, "you must go with your poor own pretty mamma Jane, as you used to call me."

"But you are not pretty mamma now,—you are old, ugly, painted mamma!"

"You little unnatural being!" cried Lady Jane, irritated beyond measure. "So, Lady Anne," she added, turning on her a look of suspicion and reproach, "you have not, I find, with all your fine schooling, taught the boy the commandment to honor his mother! And I know not how such a child should understand what being paint-

ed is ; but I comprehend still less how he should have thought of applying it as a term of reproach, if he had not been taught by some one older and wiser than himself."

"Meaning me?" haughtily demanded Lady Anne.

"If the cap fits your ladyship you may put it on." Anger, the great leveller, making even a *woman of quality vulgar*.

"Then now, Lady Jane, hear my fixed resolution," replied Lady Anne; "Your various errors I could pity and forgive; I thought you weak, not vicious; and I trusted that time, kindness, and lenity might reform you; but now that you have displayed such malignity of nature as to accuse me, your earliest friend, of an act of *baseness*, of trying to lower a mother in the opinion of her child,—an action which you know me to be incapable of,—I never will hold communion with you more. My religion teaches me to forgive you; but I feel that the woman who was capable of uttering the malignant charge you have *now* uttered is unworthy any longer to be my friend and associate." So saying, she walked out of the room; while the little Percy clung to her, crying "Take me with you, take me with you, *good mamma Anne*," and by that means increased the pangs of the already repentant Lady Jane, whose reflections were certainly of a most unpleasant nature.

"Where is Lady Anne?" said Percy, entering ready equipped for his journey; "the carriage is ready."

"She is gone,—I believe to her own room," replied Lady Jane bursting into tears, "and I, I fear, have seen her for the last time."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you know she is sometimes rather captious; and she is so offended at something I said very innocently, that she has renounced me forever!"

"But," exclaimed Percy, after a pause of indignant surprise, "you must have been very much to blame, or Lady Anne could not have formed so violent a resolution."

“Yes—I knew you would take her part,” said Lady Jane provokingly. However, I wish you would ring, and send your compliments to her, and beg to be allowed to take leave of her.”

Percy did so. Lady Anne immediately sent word, that she should be glad to see Mr Percy in her dressing room—and he obeyed the summons. He found Lady Anne pale and agitated; but, in reply to Percy’s earnest wish to know from her the cause of the quarrel, she said, “I would not repeat Lady Jane’s words to you on any account; suffice, that I never will voluntarily hold intercourse with any one that believes me, even for an instant, capable of a base action.”

“And who *can*, who *does*, or who ever *did* believe you capable of such a thing?”

“Lady Jane, sir; and any thing else I could have pitied and forgotten.”

“Amazement!” exclaimed Percy, “but if you will not explain, she shall;” and rushing down stairs, he ran in search of her. But Lady Jane, afraid of seeing him alone after his interview with Lady Anne, had left the drawing room, and was sitting with Mrs Tyrawley and her daughter in the breakfast parlor. Thither Percy followed her, and, entering with a very agitated air, desired to see her alone.

“No, thank ye,” cried Lady Jane, forcing a laugh, “I had rather stay where I am; for I know you are going to be very fierce, and the presence of these ladies may keep you a little in order.”

“No trifling, madam; I have seen Lady Anne. . .

“Who, never trifles, certainly!—Well, Mr Percy, and I suppose her grim ladyship told tales of me, and you believe them, as you deem her infallible?”

“I wish I could think the same of your ladyship,” replied Percy sarcastically;—“but as I wish not to pain your feelings unnecessarily by talking on a certain subject before these ladies, I must *insist* on leading you to another room.” And Lady Jane no longer dared to refuse compliance.

“Lady Jane,” said Percy, “I cannot, will not leave this house till I have seen you reconciled to the mistress of it, to whom we both owe so much, even though your pride be forced to undergo the misery of concessions.”

“What, sir! I flattered myself you were too proud for your wife, to bear to think of her making concessions to any one?”

“I must be proud *of* my wife before I can be proud *for* her, madam, and I am at this moment thoroughly ashamed of her.”

“Has Lady Anne then told you all?”

“She has told me nothing;—but my knowledge of her makes me think her likely to be right as far as passion can ever *be* right, for you say that she was *violent*.”

“And you *believe* me. Well, that is a great deal. However, I cannot tell a falsehood, and would rather, at any time, own myself in the wrong, than not do justice to another; therefore I *own* that *I* only was to blame; and that, however severe Lady Anne was, I deserved all and every thing she said or intended.”

“Strange, inconsistent, faulty yet fascinating being!” cried Percy, disarmed by this frank confession, “whenever I feel inclined to throw you from me with one hand, I long at the same time to clasp you with the other.”

“Thank you! thank you!” cried Lady Jane, “you are only too good to me; but go to Lady Anne, and try to mollify her.”

Percy did go, but Lady Anne was inexorable.—“I pity and forgive her,” she replied, “but I cannot associate with her;” and Percy, distressed beyond measure, returned to Lady Jane.

“I cannot live without her entire forgiveness,” said she, “I can’t *indeed*, Percy. To be renounced by my friend, my preserver, my benefactress, will kill me!—But I will make one effort to affect her; and if that fail, I fear that even your love will not support me as it is ought.” Lady Jane immediately wrote a few lines, and giving them to Percy, he went to deliver them in person to Lady Anne. Lady Anne took the note, and turned very pale

while she read it. Immediately after, without one word of objection, and in a faltering voice, she said, "I will attend you to Lady Jane immediately." Then, as soon as she saw her, she advanced towards her with open arms, and faintly articulating "I forgive you," she mingled her tears with those of Lady Jane.

Lady Jane's note was as follows ;

"You know my situation—and the delicate state of my health ;—therefore, it is not very improbable that you may never see me more, even should your relenting heart prompt you to wish to see me, and to forgive the injustice towards you of which I bitterly repent.—Ask then your own heart, Lady Anne, whether, should I die of my confinement, you would not exclaim, with intolerable and eternal bitterness of remorse,—'O my beloved Jane ! would, would that I had forgiven thee !'"

Lady Jane well knew the heart to which she appealed, and she did not, could not appeal in vain.

When all the adieus were over, and Lady Jane and Percy seated in the carriage, "now, Jane," said he, "do give me some little hint what the quarrel was about."

"Why—to be serious, I think I had some right to be provoked ; though not with Anne,—and it was all owing to Harry. For, would you believe it? when I, in joke, was teasing him to go home with me, stating myself what he used to call me, his 'poor own dear pretty mamma Jane,' the little wretch replied in great rage, 'No,—I won't. You are not my pretty mamma now,—you are my old, ugly, *painted* mamma.'"

"That was provoking indeed."

"Aye,—was it not? And can you wonder that I wished to whip our little *hope* into an utter despair?"

"Upon my word, I should have been inclined to whip him too, if I had heard him. But what had this to do with Lady Anne?"

"Oh! I chose to accuse her of not teaching theurchin to honor his mother, and hinted a suspicion, partly in fun and partly in earnest, that some one must have



*taught* the boy that I was painted! and so Anne thought I meant her."

"And did you not mean her?"

"Something very like it, I own; but then I was in a *passion*, you know!"

"Well—well—let us say no more on the subject," said Percy. "I see yours is but a bad case; so I am very glad that a juror was withdrawn, and that the matter goes no further."

Though Lady Jane arrived in town in perfect health, the agitation of mind which she had undergone, and the alarm she had experienced from the badness of the roads, had a pernicious effect on her frame, and a premature confinement was the consequence soon after she was again settled in London, during which she had the satisfaction to see, by Percy's affectionate attention, that though she had *deserved* to lose his heart, that heart was still fondly devoted to her. There are men, I believe, in whom the habit of constancy, and of undeviating attachment, is as strong and unconquerable as in virtuous women; and ill befall that wife who though conscious of her happiness in possessing the faithful tenderness of a devoted husband, can dare to abuse the power which she possesses, and to tyrannize, because she may do so with impunity, over the heart that loves her even with all her faults!

Whatever change dissipation, secret anxiety, and late hours, might have made in Lady Jane's person, there was no alteration in her manners; they, and even her countenance at times, possessed all that abundance of charm which had in her earlier hours so fascinated Percy; and so powerful had been their united influence on Mrs Tyrawley and her daughter, that Lady Jane gained more on their affections in a few days, than Lady Anne had done in several months;—nay, so strong were their prepossessions in favor of Lady Jane, that they had no doubt but that, in the late quarrel, Lady Anne's proud, unyielding spirit was alone to blame; and they were quite shocked at Mr Percy's forcing his wife to make conces-

sions to her, which they had *no doubt* he had done. "For my part," observed Mrs Tyrawley, "I should have been very jealous of the woman to whom my Mr Tyrawley should have forced *me* to humble myself. Indeed I would *not* have done it. And if Lady Jane had asked me *my* advice, I should have told her *my mind*. Men are entirely what we make them; and like spaniels, the more they are ill-treated, the fonder they grow. Remember *that*, Mary, and never give up an inch of your prerogative when you are a wife. I am sure Lady Anne herself would not do so, though she was the means of her cousin's doing it."

Thus hasty in judging, and consequently thus erroneous in judgment, are nine hundred and ninety persons out of a thousand, who take upon themselves to pass sentence on the actions and sentiments of others! I have heard of an old gentleman, a humorist, who, living in a large city, and having appropriated one room in his house to parties who assembled there for the purposes of rational conversation, had different texts of Scripture of a prohibitory nature, in black and gold letters, on different sides of the walls;—such as, "Keep thy tongue from evil speaking!" "Judge not, lest ye be judged! for with the measure ye mete it shall be meted to you again;" and many others of the same kind. If any one regardless of these golden rules, ventured to tell a tale of gossip, and talk of persons instead of things,—he used to point to these warning letters; and if that was not sufficient, he used to take up a book of history; and presenting it to the offender, it was his custom to say, "I shall be very happy to hear any little anecdote about my friend Hannibal or Scipio, which may have escaped the notice of historians, but you must excuse my listening to *modern biography*. When I read or hear any thing *fabulous*, I can forgive its *lies* only in favor of its *antiquity*."—If this hint was not taken, he was careful never to admit the offending person again. And indeed such exclusion was not often necessary; for those whose powers of animation could only be awakened by dirty gossip, alias news, and

the wagging of the tongue of detraction, found his parties as dull to *them*, as they themselves were odious to *him*; and in a short time after these parties were instituted, and these rules adhered to, those who composed them might be said to breathe an air untainted by the pernicious hydrogen of slander.

But to return to Lady Anne, who had not as yet learnt how injurious to the cause of virtue are manners which repel, and that even truth itself must wear a becoming dress, in order to make her welcome;—One evening the little Harry, who had been to spend the day with some boys rather older than himself, at a gentleman's house in the village, came home crying and his temples bleeding profusely.

"Be not alarmed, my lady," said the footman, who had been sent to fetch him, "master Percy and another young gentleman quarrelled, and master Percy was knocked down; and so, my lady, in falling he struck his head against something and set his temple bleeding, my lady."

"But I am afraid he is hurt," cried Lady Anne, "as he cries so bitterly. Come with me my dearest boy, and let me know every thing." Accordingly she took him to her own apartment; and as soon as he could speak intelligibly, the child said, "I don't cry because I am hurt, but because Master Apreece said I was no gentleman, and he would never play with me again! Now an't I a gentleman, mamma Anne, and ought he not to play with me again?"

Lady Anne could not help smiling at this serious appeal from a gentleman of seven years old; but with great gravity she answered, that it was not birth alone that made the gentleman, that good behaviour was necessary, and she must beg to know what he had done, before she could decide whether Master Apreece was right or not.

"Nay, I am sure, mamma Anne, *I* did no harm; for I only spoke as I have often heard you speak."

"Indeed! and how was that?"

“ Oh ! Master Apreece said something which I did not think true, so I said, ‘ That it is not, I know ; and so let ’s have none of that, if you please, for you don’t speak truth ;’ and so he knocked me down.”

“ I do not wonder at it, my dear, as you accused him of being a liar ; but when did you ever hear *me* speak thus ?”

“ Oh ! I have often heard you say,—‘ That ’s not true, I am sure, and I wonder you can repeat such vile stories ;’ and it was only last week, that when Miss Jones and her mother and aunt were here, you interrupted Miss Jones in a story she was telling, with—‘ Say no more, Miss Jones—say no more, I will not hear you ; I am sure the story you are telling is false, and I wonder any one dare repeat such things ; for my part, I hate gossips, or gossippers ;’—and I am sure, mamma Anne, I wonder Miss Jones did not knock you down. But she certainly looked as if she had a great mind to do it ; and if she had been Master Apreece, she would have done it—though I am sure, with all the pains I took, I know I did not look and speak like *you*.”

“ Pains ! did you take pains then to look and speak like me ?”

“ O yes ! for Papa told me that the more I was like you, the better he would love me.” And Lady Anne could not resist kissing his poor wounded temple. “ Well, Harry ! I plead guilty to this rudeness to Miss Jones, for *rudeness* it was, and I must learn to improve for your sake, as you are such a shrewd observer and close imitator of my actions.”

“ *Rudeness !*” asked the child. “ Aye, they said they supposed that I learnt such manners of *you* ; for, said Master Apreece, your ‘ mamma Anne, as you call her, does not mind what she says, and every one thinks she is a disagreeable woman.’ And I was so angry at his speaking thus of you, that I tried to knock him down ; but his brother held me back ; however, I did give him a pretty good kick on the shins.”

Lady Anne was too just to punish a child for a fault

of which she had been the cause, and too wise not to profit by the severe lesson which she had learnt. She also saw that she could more easily amend him by example than by precept; and what all the raillery and advice of Lady Jane had failed to effect, was brought about by the artless eloquence of her affectionate son:

“Yes,” said Lady Anne to herself, “I will at last, for this dear child’s sake, condescend, as Percy once said, to be agreeable. I will dismiss my advanced guard of *brusqueries*, which used to frighten many from approaching me. But hard indeed will the task be, and no motive less powerful than mine could enable me to succeed in it; still, it is not *impossible* to reform one’s manners. Moral habits, however wrong, cannot I believe be altered at my time of life, any more than a defect of form or face; but manners may be improved and changed, as certainly, though not so easily, as one’s dress; and I must own that winning manners are to the virtues, what a becoming habit is to the person; therefore, it is the duty of those who wish to promote the influence of virtue, to make her appear in as attractive a form as possibly.”

The next morning, Mrs Tyrawley, after praising Lady Jane, ventured to hint that, by her appearance at times, she feared she was not happy, and from what she saw she doubted that Mr Percy was not a kind husband. If Mrs Tyrawley had said this only the preceding day, Lady Anne would have thundered upon her with, “I wonder you dare, madam, presume to calumniate a most worthy man, of whom you can know nothing,”—or words to that effect, accompanied by looks and tones of the most indignant contempt.—But now, according to her late resolution, Lady Anne checked the rising storm, and forced herself on principle to swallow down two large draughts of cold water which stood near her, before she replied. At length she said very gently, “The error which you have fallen into relative to Mr Percy is one, my dear Mrs Tyrawley, which your own penetration will soon convince you is an error, whenever you have an opportunity of seeing more of that gentleman.”

"To be sure," said Mrs Tyrawley, pleased at the implied compliment, "one ought not to be too hasty in judging."

"A wise and virtuous remark," resumed Lady Anne. "I will not affront your sagacity, nor violate truth so much as to say my poor cousin is quite happy. She has, I see, fears concerning the event of her confinement, which would alone, you know, be sufficient to cast a shade over her countenance."

"Certainly, certainly," replied Mrs Tyrawley, thinking she never saw Lady Anne so agreeable before.

"And I assure you, my dear Mrs Tyrawley," she added, "I say it to you as a friend, Lady Jane gave me such an instance of her husband's recent kindness to her, as affected me even to tears."

"Really! Well—to see how one may be deceived!"

"Pray," asked Miss Tyrawley with a very wise look, "is it true that Lady Jane had lost a great deal of money at play?"

Lady Anne could hardly command herself at this coarse and direct question, and she had recourse to the water-bottle again.

"Lady Jane has played certainly," observed Lady Anne at last, "but, my dear Miss Tyrawley, you know too much of the world to place any confidence in newspaper reports and gossip stories; therefore I am sure your candor will lead you not only to disbelieve that Lady Jane's losses are very great, but also to contradict such assertions yourself whenever you hear them. Contradiction of such reports from a woman like you, must always have weight with rational good people."

"I am very glad to hear your ladyship say this," replied the flattered Miss Tyrawley, "and I will take care to contradict the report whenever I hear it."

Soon after Harry came in, accompanied by a prosing old servant, who wanted to speak to his lady on business, —a man who usually tired out Lady Anne's patience very soon; and the poor man, conscious of this, was always slower with Lady Anne, from fear, than he was with

any one else. This day he was perhaps slower than ever; and Lady Anne could scarcely refrain from saying, as usual, "really, Hibbert, you are so tiresome I can't bear it," and was inclined to give vent to even more *alarming* expressions of weariness.

"I see, my lady, I see, as usual, I tire your heart out," said the poor old man, "and you are quite impatient."

"You mistake, Hibbert," replied Lady Anne gently, "I am *not* impatient; that is, I mean that I will *try* never to be impatient again; for it is a very bad custom, and I mean to improve—for you know, Hibbert, I am not yet too old to learn."

"Too *old*! God bless your ladyship! No—that you are not, and I never seed you look younger or more beautifuller in your life, my lady! I hope no offence."

"None at all, good Hibbert, but go on; and don't fancy that you weary me." And the old man proceeded. But it required all Lady Anne's firmness of character to enable her to keep her resolution of not expressing her impatience; and at length the little Harry exclaimed with a laugh, "Dear me, Hibbert, have you not done yet? I am sure my mamma Anne is completely tired, and she has pleasanter things to do than to sit here listening to your tiresome speeches."

"Your mamma Anne, sir, is of a different opinion," replied Lady Anne, "and feels it her duty to listen with respectful attention to a worthy old servant, who has always done his duty by her and her family. I must therefore desire you, Master Percy, to leave the room, for having made that fine speech; and when I have finished talking to Hibbert, I have something serious to say to *you*." The child, accustomed to obey, left the room, though in high displeasure; and at last, much to Lady Anne's joy, Hibbert ended and departed.

"Well! Lady Anne, I am sure I wonder at your patience," said Miss Tyrawley.

"You wonder, I presume, at its *novelty*, rather than its *extent*," replied Lady Anne smiling, and going in search of Harry, whom she soon appeased by telling

him her own resolution to amend her manners, and curb her impatience in order to set him a good example; and she contrived to stimulate his pride and ambition in a virtuous direction, by begging him to set her a good example in return. When Lady Anne retired for the night, she began on principle to recall the occurrences of the day, and to ask her own heart, whether, by substituting gentleness for roughness, and forbearance for impatience, she had at all violated truth and sincerity; and her heart entirely acquitted her. "But suppose," said Lady Anne, "instead of trying to set Mrs Tyrawley right concerning Percy, and her daughter right concerning Lady Jane, I had replied by indignant violence, as I usually do—the consequence would have been, that pique would have made them tenacious of their opinion and I should have injured those whom I wish to serve. Aye,—let me in future ever bear in mind the fable of the wind and the sun! and I will make Harry get it by heart immediately."

The next week the Jones's were coming to dine with her; though Miss Jones, resenting Lady Anne's rudeness, could with difficulty be prevailed upon by her father and mother to venture near her again. To this family Lady Anne now resolved to add the Apreeces, who, concluding that Harry had told his aunt all their son had done and had said, expected never to be invited again. It was therefore an agreeable surprise to them to receive an invitation written in Lady Anne's own hand, and begging them to bring their children with them—as she meant to let Harry have a party as well as herself. Accordingly, on the day appointed, the little Jones's (grandchildren of Mr and Mrs Jones,) and the Apreeces with their family, arrived at Green Rock. Miss Jones kept aloof from Lady Anne, and looked cold and proud; but Lady Anne's unwonted courtesy at length a little mollified her, and though the Apreeces, particularly Charles, the offender, looked awkward and conscious at first, Lady Anne seemed so gracious and good humored,



that they flattered themselves she was ignorant of what had passed.

It was not long before Lady Anne took an opportunity, in Harry's hearing, to say to Miss Jones, "My conscience smites me on your account, and tells me I was rude to you when you last favored me with your company."

"Rude! my lady!" said Miss Jones blushing, confused, and with too little firmness of character to dare to say "Yes."

"Your kindness may have led you," continued Lady Anne, "to excuse and forget it; but I am sure that I contradicted you very roughly, and said something about gossips and gossipers which nothing could excuse. I therefore now, my dear Miss Jones, tender my most sincere apologies to you, and trust to your indulgence for receiving them graciously."

Miss Jones did so, and was indeed so gratified by this condescension from the proud Lady Anne, that she wondered how she could ever have been so weak as not to like her.—This lesson and this example were not lost on the little Harry; for Lady Anne saw him soon after go up to Charles Apreece, and heard him say, that *knowing* he had been very rude to him, and deserved the blow which he had given him, he begged his pardon for what he had *said*; though he could not for what he had done, when he spoke so rudely of his dear mamma Anne.—Charles Apreece, being old enough to feel awkward at this address, as he was sure it was overheard, shook the little Harry by the hand, and said, "I must forget and forgive;"—and Harry took him to look at his rabbits.

Lady Anne the whole day made a point of showing marked attention to Charles Apreece, and in the course of the evening she took him by the hand, telling him she wanted to speak with him alone; while the terrified boy, having no doubt but that she was going to take him seriously to task for what he had said of her, would have refused to accompany her, if he had not thought he ought to be too much of a man to be afraid of a woman. When they had reached another room, Lady Anne said, "You

have given Harry and me too a lesson, my good boy, for which we shall, I trust, be the better as long as we live. To give any one the lie, and speak coarsely and rudely, is a sort of *vice*; and I thank you for the blow you gave Harry, and also for what you said of *me*, as it made me look into myself, and I hope to be more agreeable in future. I wish therefore to give you a token of my gratitude, and I have netted this little purse for you, which I hope you will do me the favor to accept."—The poor surprised, sheepish boy could neither look up nor speak, and he took his purse with scarcely a bow of thanks.—“Now,” said Lady Anne, “it is my turn to give *you* a lesson; you were very wrong in speaking disrespectfully of me to my adopted child; it was a fault which though anger might occasion, it could not excuse; and though he was wrong in kicking you out of revenge, yet his feeling of resentment was an honorable feeling. I know he has made his apologies to you for his trespass against *you*; and if you are the generous boy which I am disposed to think you, you will ask him to excuse yours against *him*.” Charles Apreece found it easier to look Lady Anne in the face when she reproved, than when she thanked him; and when she ceased, he ventured to say, “I beg your pardon, and I will beg Harry’s.”

“There’s a good boy,” said Lady Anne; “and now, if you please, you and I will begin our little ball together; for I have ordered the harpers into the hall, and we will have a dance.”

On which Lady Anne, leaning on her young partner, entered the hall, where the company was already assembled; and the delighted parent saw Lady Anne put herself at the head of the set with Charles, while Mrs Tyrawley and Mrs Jones were the only persons of the party who did not join the dance.

“I cannot think,” said Miss Tyrawley to her mother in a whisper, “what has effected such a change in Lady Anne. To think of her dancing, and with that boy who knocked Harry down!” But Lady Anne never danced except with children; and now, meaning to pay Charles

Apreece a particular compliment, she sat down, and danced no more, as soon as she had danced two dances with him; and Charles as soon as he quitted her went up to Harry, and begged his pardon for having spoken ill of Lady Anne;—a pardon which the happy and generous little boy immediately granted.

Oh! what a revolution in every one's sentiments had now taken place respecting Lady Anne! Her beauty had always been unquestioned; but now her courteous manners, her grace, her countenance, were equally praised; and Mrs Tyrawley was seduced, by the unusual suavity of her manner, to accost her once by the title of dear cousin! Lady Anne felt, forcibly felt, the alteration of feeling towards her which this appellation implied; and turning towards her with one of Lady Jane's smiles, she said, "Thank you, dear madam. I was afraid till now, that you did not choose to own me for a cousin, as you never favored me by calling me so;"—while tears started into Mrs Tyrawley's eye, for shame at having so long mistaken Lady Anne's character.

"Lady Anne," said she, "or my dear cousin, you are one of the few persons who ought to have a window in their heart."

"I understand you," said Lady Anne smiling, "but I trust that it will in future be unnecessary; for I mean to have an inscription on the outside—to show what there is *within*."

The next week they were agreeably surprised by a visit from Percy and Lionel; and as Lady Jane was tolerably well, Percy took advantage of the Christmas recess to steal down to Green Rock for a few days. He gazed with all a father's pride at the beauty and healthy appearance of Harry, and with a father's anxious tenderness on the contrast between him and his brother. Nor was he slow to perceive that their minds were as different as their persons; and he found that, though Lady Jane was quite as sensible and as well-informed a woman as Lady Anne, her want of regularity in her mode of teaching, had prevented the child's profiting as much as

he ought by the instructions he received from a private tutor ; and but for the fear of hurting Lady Jane's feelings, he would have left Lionel under Lady Anne's care. But the little Lionel had a longer opportunity of sharing in Harry's education than Percy expected ; for a deep snow fell in one night, and continued so long as to render the roads impassable with safety ; and the terrified Lady Jane, losing in fear for the safety of her husband and child, all dread of Lady Anne's increasing influence, wrote to desire he would *on no account* think of return-till the roads were quite safe.

Could Lady Anne have thought it right to rejoice at this detention, she would have rejoiced ; but, accustomed to struggle with and to conquer every feeling that militated against her sense of right, she tried to regret the necessity which made Percy her inmate for so long a time, and determined to see as little of him as possible. Percy was not long before he perceived the change in Lady Anne's manner, and also in his little boy's. One day he was joking with Harry ; and the child not understanding that he spoke ironically, forgot himself so far as to exclaim in his former rude way, "That it is not, though—and you don't speak truth."

"Harry," cried Lady Anne ; and the conscious child added, with many blushes, "I am sorry to contradict you, papa, but I think you are wrong." And while Percy hugged the little boy to his heart, he said, "How is this Lady Anne ? There are great changes and improvements here."

Lady Anne smiled, and said, "Harry, shall you and I tell papa what brought this improvement in our manner ?"

"O dear ! yes ; tell papa all about it," said the delighted child ; and Percy listened with the most interested attention. But when Lady Anne had ended, he felt a degree of embarrassment he could not account for, and an utter inability to express to her half of what he felt on her candid avowal of her fault, and her resolution to amend it for the sake of her charge. Besides, he re-

collected how often he had said Lady Anne's *brusquerie* was her only defect ; and he beheld her before him, as handsome and excellent as ever, without this only barrier between her and the power of being irresistible.

"You are an admirable creature," he at last articulated ;—"and I shall bless the day when my child became the child of your adoption." Then with a deep sigh he quitted the room—while Lady Anne allowed herself to dwell neither on the sigh nor the words.

The fortnight of enforced confinement flew too rapidly for Percy and Lionel ; and so did it for the ladies. The Tyrawleys lost all prejudice *against* Percy, and imbibed a strong one *for* him ;—and while Mrs Tyrawley spun, Miss Tyrawley worked muslin, and Lady Anne coloured maps for Harry, Percy read aloud to them ; and the hours which he did not pass in the House of Commons, now for the first time of many years were passed in rational amusement combined with daily instruction.

"O that my own home were like this !" he exclaimed to himself. "It might have been ! and why, O why is it not?" But at length the parting hour arrived ; and Percy, with a full heart, departed with his weeping child for that home so different to the one that he had left.

About six weeks after their departure, Lady Anne's peace was interrupted by a letter from Lady Jane, urging her, if she had any regard for the peace and honor of Percy, and any wish to save her from addresses which might end at least in the loss of reputation, to pay to Lord Lorimer several thousand pounds which she had lost to him at play ! he having offered to give up the debt, if she would allow him to prosecute his suit to her as a lover ; and stating that, though she loathed the proposal, yet dread of confessing her fault to Percy prevailed on her to accede to it for a time.

Lady Anne sat for some minutes in speechless, motionless horror, after she had received this letter. Whatever her errors might be, she had always considered Lady Jane's virtue as impregnable ; but now her confidence in that was destroyed ; as she had proved that the dread of

incurring her husband's displeasure was more powerful over her, than that of exposing herself to the risk of dishonoring him. But Lady Anne was wrong. Lady Jane well knew she was in no danger by consenting to receive Lord Lorimer's addresses, because she was certain that Lady Anne would, when informed of what she had done, immediately hasten to her relief. But at first Lady Anne started wildly from her seat, as she could not devise immediate means of doing this. But she recollected that money had been offered for one of her estates very recently. "Yes, I will sell it," cried she; "far better will it be for the child to possess one estate less, than to lose a dearer possession, the consciousness of his mother's unblemished honor and reputation!"

In a few hours every thing was arranged for Lady Anne's departure for town; and telling her friends that indispensable business summoned her away, she consigned the weeping Percy to their care, while with a beating heart she proceeded on her journey, attended by an old steward of her father's. She drove immediately on her arrival to her bankers'; and putting into their hands the writings of an estate for which she had been offered 20,000*l.* she requested of them the immediate loan of the sum she wanted; and having received it she returned to the carriage in which she had left her steward, and telling him she had business with Lord Lorimer, she drove to his house. Lady Anne, though conscious of her own unsullied purity, and spotless character, had too wise a regard to decorum, and the established usages of society, to call alone on Lord Lorimer, even though on business of such serious importance; therefore, when the servant said his lord was at home, she insisted that her steward Mr Moreton should get out with her. Lord Lorimer was at home, reading, and in his dressing-gown, when his gentleman entered, and said a lady wished speak to him.

"A lady! what lady? Is she young and handsome?"  
"Young, and beautiful as an angel, my lord."

"Bravo! show her into the little parlor!" "My lord, I have shown her into the drawing-room."—"Block-

head ! is she proper drawing-room company, think you ?”  
“Yes, my lord ! I should think her, by her look and manner, fit for a palace ; and that she was a queen. She is not, I assure you, my lord, like any ladies that ever call on your lordship.”

“Bravo ! another Jane de Montfort ! I protest this beauty has made the fellow eloquent ! Well ; now to judge for myself.”

“Stay ! stay, my lord ! pray put on your coat ; I am sure the lady is a lady, my lord !” However, Lord Lorimer proceeded as he was, having first looked in the glass to ascertain whether he was “*in face* ;” and sauntering affectedly into the drawing-room, his astonished eye rested on the tall majestic figure and severe though beautiful features of Lady Anne Mortimer.

“This is an honor, madam,” said he, “really so unaccountable,” (though in his heart he suspected why she came,) “that I should not have thought of coming down to your ladyship in this dress. Pray excuse me while I change it.” And glad of an excuse for retiring in order to recover himself, he went back to change his gown for his coat.

“You are right, Dawlish,” said he to his man ; “there is only one Lady Anne Mortimer in the world, and I might have known her by your description, could I have thought her highmightiness would have deigned to call on such a sinner as myself.” Then, having new tied his neckcloth, and new brushed his fine black crop, he returned to Lady Anne, who had relinquished none of her dignity, but with her arms folded in a long velvet mantle, and her head and face uncovered, stood motionless and grand, like Mr Kemble in *Coriolanus* on the hearth of Tullus Hostilius.

“I beg you will do me the honor, madam, to be seated.”

“No ! I will not, my lord,” replied Lady Anne, no longer the urbane, smiling mistress of Green Rock ; but cold, haughty, and repellent as the Lady Anne of former days. “My business with you will soon be settled.”

“I am sorry to hear it for *my* sake, as I should be most proud to detain your ladyship some time under my roof; honored, indeed, by such a presence!”

“As I should not consider the honor as mutual, my lord, I cannot regret the unavoidable shortness of my stay. Allow me to go with you into the next room, and you, my good Moreton, stay here till I return.” She then entered the next room through folding doors, which were open; therefore, though she spoke so low that Moreton could not hear, he saw her all the time.—“I came, my lord, as you may guess, by desire of Lady Jane Percy, to discharge the debt she owes you; and to assure you, that Lady Jane has in me a friend and a relation, who would spend the last shilling of her fortune sooner than allow her to owe for one instant a pecuniary obligation to Lord Lorimer, or any man.” So saying, she laid down the money, and turned her dark eyes upon him with a look of such severe expression, while her full red lip projected still more with contemptuous indignation, that even Lord Lorimer, was awed and abashed.

“Come, come, Lady Anne,” said he, recovering himself; “unless Lady Jane really desired you to pay this money, I cannot take it.”

“Sir! I expressly told you that I came by Lady Jane’s desire; and if I did not you must know that when one woman confides to another a disgraceful secret, she makes that other the judge of her actions; and if I had not waited on you at the earnest request of Lady Jane, I should have come to have satisfied *myself*.”—“But now, really, Lady Anne,” replied Lord Lorimer, piqued into a wish to provoke her; “can you be such a novice as to suppose Lady Jane *wished* in her *heart* to get out of my debt?”

“My lord, can I, do you think, suppose my cousin, Lady Jane Percy, an abandoned woman?”

“Abandoned! No. But do you think it possible for a woman of her associations and habits of life to be so *much* shocked at this little debt to me?—Remember, Lady Anne,” taking her hand by force, “Scripture says, one cannot touch pitch without being defiled!”



“Pitch has touched me,” replied Lady Anne, drawing her hand away with an action expressive of loathing, “and yet I trust I am not defiled.”—Lord Lorimer immediately turned away muttering a terrible oath.—“But my lord,” said Lady Anne, “I am losing time; here, as I said before, is your money!—And now, my lord, here ends the visit of Lady Anne Mortimer.”—Then, with a polite but chilling curtsy, she beckoned Moreton, and not waiting to have her carriage called, tripped lightly down stairs before Lord Lorimer could even offer his hand. But he followed her to the door, and stood bowing there till she drove off.

“That is a woman, indeed!” said he to Dawlish, when he came to dress him. “Such a woman might tempt a man to marry, for she has a proper sense of own value; and though Lucifer was humble, compared to her—her pride is that of conscious virtue and a character untainted!”

Lady Anne went from Lord Lorimer to Lady Jane; dreading the emotion which she knew they should both feel on meeting, and perplexed to know what excuse she should make to Percy for so sudden and unexpected a journey to town.—Yet surely business was a sufficient excuse; and it was only her consciousness that made the difficulty.—She found Lady Jane so unwell as to keep her bed greatest part of the day; and Lady Anne was so shocked when she saw her faded looks that every other feeling was swallowed up in pity and apprehension.—As soon as Lady Jane heard Lady Anne announced, she screamed aloud with joy, and sprung up in her bed; but as soon as she saw her, she sunk down again and hid her face in the bed-clothes.

“Nay, Jane, look up! I came not to upbraid you;—I come as a friend, not a reprover.” And Lady Jane received her in her arms.—“Well, Anne! my good angel! will you, will you save me?”

“No;—for you are already saved.—I have this moment paid Lord Lorimer.”

Lady Jane could not speak—and agitation soon forced

her to lie down again. But such power had Lady Jane's mind over her body, that now her debt to Lord Lorimer was discharged, and Lady Anne had not reproached her, her health returned, and she was able to join Percy and Lady Anne at dinner in her own dressing room.—Percy was delighted to see Lady Anne, but very sorry that she did not bring Harry with her.—“I will tell you what, Percy,” said Lady Jane, “though I would not have sent for Lady Anne to be with me during my approaching confinement—now she is here, I cannot part with her again ; and I am sure she cannot, will not, dare not refuse to stay. Therefore, let Barnes come up directly with Harry, and our cousin Tyrawleys remain to take care of Green Rock.”

Lady Anne did indeed not dare to refuse ; for she well knew, if Lady Jane's confinement should be fatal, that she should not forgive herself for having denied her. Accordingly Barnes and Harry were sent for, and arrived in three days after in Piccadilly.

Thus then was Lady Anne obliged, though very reluctantly, to take up her residence once more in London. Still she could not but own to herself, that the society which Lady Jane assembled at her house at least two or three times in a week, for the purpose of conversation, was productive of the highest species of intellectual entertainment. Men of talents, whether of rank or otherwise, graced the parties of Lady Jane, and called forth in their elegant and lively hostess the colloquial excellence which peculiarly distinguished her ; while Lady Anne gratified in listening to those sallies in which she thought herself not qualified to join, sat in unmoved though intelligent silence ; and while Lady Jane, light, splendid and changeable, sparkling like the drop lustre that hung over her head, diffused around her an ever varying radiance,—Lady Anne resembled more a tall and stately candelabre, diffusing a steady and unvaried light, and keeping one fixed though ever graceful position.

But the great ornament, the great charm, of these in-

tellectual evenings was Percy himself. The ready playfulness of his fancy ; the graceful manner in which he narrated, and the mild yet convincing way in which he argued, made him at once the delight of his guests, and the pride and pleasure of his wife and of Lady Anne. But the latter suppressed, as if it were a criminal indulgence, the pleasure which she took in his conversation on these occasions, and suppressed it the more, because she suspected that Percy had a secret satisfaction in shining before *her* ;—a suspicion which only too soon was excited also in the breast of Lady Jane. The latter was therefore very glad when, all remains of indisposition being vanished, she was able to mix generally in the world again, and to have an excuse for discontinuing those meetings at her own house, which could not fail to throw Percy more into the presence of Lady Anne than her jealous feelings could support with calmness. For it was indeed only too true that Percy felt his own home quite a new abode to *him*, since Lady Anne returned to it ; and several times he caught himself calling her “ Anne,” as he used to do in his boyish days ; but correcting himself, he said “ Lady Anne” the next moment.—Still, he could not bear the formality of that title, and therefore substituted “ My dear cousin,” or “ Coz,” for both. And Lady Jane, having easily discovered the reason of this change of appellation, in the new feeling which Percy, unconsciously perhaps, indulged towards Lady Anne, became even more wretched than she had been before—Still she felt that she had deserved this misery ; for was it not the contrast of her errors with Lady Anne’s virtues, which had excited in the mind of Percy the feelings which distressed her ? This conscious uneasiness had however power to make her reflect more than she had usually done ; and in one of these reflecting humors, the following dialogue took place between her and her cousin :—

“ It is impossible, Anne,” said she, “ to account satisfactorily for the great difference which exists between you and me, though in our age and our rank in life we

are so equal, and in blood so very near to each other ; and this difference was, I know, discernible even in our childhood."

"It fills me with no wonder, Jane," replied Lady Anne, "for the varieties in character are as many as in faces. I once heard a great artist say, that no head or face had its duplicate, properly speaking, and I believe that the same thing may be said of every mind."

"But admitting that truth," replied Lady Jane, "and admitting also the former power of circumstances, how comes it that the same apparent circumstances operated so differently on you and on me?"

"I, like you was born a girl, when my parents wanted a boy to inherit the titles and entailed estates, and were naturally enough disappointed, as they had no other children, at the certainty that the said titles and estates would go to a cousin whom neither your parents nor mine cared for, and whom they scarcely knew."

"You should, however, add, Jane, that both you and I were as fondly beloved as if we had been of that sex which would have gratified their ambition as well as their love."

"True ;—and that adds to the list of operating circumstances in which we resemble each other. But to go on—I was born an heiress, however, though not an heir, and my father's personal and my mother's entailed property were my ever destined portion ; while your mother's immense possessions were to descend to you, and you therefore were always a predestinate *great* heiress. Yet, there never was a time when I was not extravagant and you prudent, though I was not born, and knew I was not, to above a sixth part of your fortune ; and I always used to hear you called my *rich cousin* !—And I wonder how this could be—and—you smile?"

"Yes. I smile to see that you wonder, and imagine probably a remote cause for this difference in our daily habits, when a proximate and very obvious one would satisfactorily account for it."

"Well, explain."

“ My dear Jane, our mothers and our fathers were as different in their habits as you and I are ; and I have always felt my affectionate pity for your errors increased by the consciousness that I owe probably to your mother’s warning example, that system of education which has preserved me from those rocks which have wrecked you ; my own conscious safety made me feel the more for your danger.”

“ Was my mother so notoriously extravagant ? ”

“ Her sister, my beloved mother, thought her so ; and though her fortune was not by any means equal to my mother’s, who had been treated as an *elder son*, she always exceeded *her* in her expenses as much as you have exceeded *me* ; and conscious that the different sort of education which they had received had occasioned this difference of character, as the Marchioness of D—— was brought up by a sensible well-principled aunt, and the Countess of L—— by a weak mother of great laxity of principle, my beloved parent, assisted by the strong intellect and rigid integrity of her husband, endeavored to guard me by early habits of right conduct from the errors of her sister ;—errors which would, she saw, become the portion of her sister’s offspring.”

“ Well. But how did your parents, however able, guarantee you from the dangers to which I was exposed ; namely, that of being told by servants, and governesses, that I was an heiress, and ought to have all I wished ; and that money,—what was money to me ? that I might eat gold if I liked.”

“ In the first place, I never had a governess, and my mother, as I was an only child, kept me *almost* always in her sight ; therefore I was very little with servants ; and ideas of the true duties and rights of heiresses were instilled into me too deeply by my parents, to make me in any danger of being misled by the false ideas which servants might attempt to give me. But our servants, from interested motives, and also from respect to their lord and lady, did what other dependents in similar circumstances would do, they chimed in with the plans of Lord and

Lady D——; and I do not remember that any servant ever offered to tempt me to an action which *principle*, or *my parents* disowned. I use them as *synonymous terms*," added Lady Anne; with a glow of filial pride on her cheek, and a tear of filial regret in her eye; "for the dictates of my parents were, I well know, those only of reason and of virtue."

"I should like some of this chemical process of theirs, which produced pure gold, while *my* poor papa and mamma produced gold full of alloy; for I must say, Anne, I think I have some gold about me, and I believe I am as generous in a pecuniary point of view as you are."

"In every thing," replied Lady Anne modestly, "you would have been my equal, if not superior, doubt it not, if you had had my advantages."

"Well, thank ye, Lady Anne! it is so pleasant to be able to lay the burthen of one's sins on another's shoulders!"

"What! on those of a parent, Lady Jane? O fy!"

"Aye, very true. And I'll say O fy! also, if you will not look so..... But, dear Anne, I remember how my poor mother laughed, when she came home from a visit to yours in the country, and saw you looking so demure, and so contented in a shabby cloak and hat; and when she asked why you were allowed to wear a dress so unworthy a great heiress, the Marchioness answered, that it was because you had voluntarily offered to go without a new cloak and hat, that the money they would cost might be expended on a poor family which you had discovered in the neighborhood—'What nonsense!' replied my mother, (Lady L——,) 'when you could afford to give Anne those new clothes, and money besides for the poor family!'—'I wish solemnly,' answered the Marchioness, 'to impress on my daughter's mind, that self denial is the foundation of every virtue, and that on personal sacrifices is built the most acceptable benevolence to others.' And then,' added my mother, as she related this scene to my father, 'that solemn child Lady Anne looked round at me so self-satisfied,

and so conceited, that I could have whipped the little urchin."

"And what effect had this maternal wisdom on you?" asked Lady Anne smiling.

"What it might have had, I do not know," said Lady Jane, "for my father replied, 'you had better stay at home and whip your own urchin, Hortensia; for I suspect she deserves it rather more than this good little Anne; for, if she *did* look conceited, it was the conceit of virtue.'—'But what right has a child to look, or be, conceited at all?'—'Ask your daughter Jane, ma'am, whenever you dress her in a new bonnet, and cry out, how lovely she looks! Come hither, my beautiful child, and kiss me.' My mother bit her lip, but did not reply; and the pleasure which I felt at hearing my mother laugh at you, of whom I was always jealous, was damped entirely by my father's defence of you; and I even learnt to think that *I* should like to earn what my father called the conceit of virtue."

"Your father, at least, seems to have had wise ideas as a parent?"

"Yes. But he was too volatile to think long and too indolent to act on his own wise precepts. The light he shed on my path was only that of lightning, bright and transient, and more formed by its sudden flash, and as sudden extinction, to mislead than direct me."

"What a pity! for he had mind enough to appreciate the conduct which your mother ridiculed; and believe me, Jane, that to a succession of personal sacrifices like these, I owe that indifference to dress, and consequently that want of temptation to extravagance in it, which, though I may have carried it too far, has preserved me from many of the miseries which you have endured. But Lady L—— only witnessed one instance in which, in principle, my mother founded my education on an annihilation of selfishness. From childhood I was taught to share every thing that was given me with others, and to consider myself last. That eagerness, that greediness to be first and best served, which disgusts one every day

in children, was never conquered in me, because it was never suffered to gain ground,—and all my habits were those of regard to the accommodation of others before that of my own. Less acute observers than my revered parents were, would laugh at these plans, and fancy them trifling and unnecessary ; but depend on it that the moralists of all ages have not only considered man as a bundle of habits, but the human character is made up of almost as many imperceptible particles, of which habits are the chief ingredient, as those which compose a mosaic pavement—and it is on the purity, the brilliancy, and the strength of those component parts that the value of a character or the beauty of a pavement depends.”

“Very true,” Anne. But *still* the question is not decided to my satisfaction, why I was so different from you from *earliest* childhood. Lavish I always was ; and though I was always ready to give to others, I was equally fond of giving to myself.—I should have been a princess certainly, for where others gave ten pounds I always gave fifty.”

“Then I hope you would have been a princess without a principality, else your subjects would have been greatly to be pitied ; for unless economy be the basis of even a *prince's* virtues and charities, he will in time be as poor as the meanest of his subjects.”

“Aye—but economy was never a word in my vocabulary, nor in that of any one belonging to me ; and when I read of Cleopatra's dissolving a most precious pearl and drinking it off, I always admired her spirit, and wished I could do the same.”

“That is exaggeration, Lady Jane ; but still a weaker and uncorrected feeling of that sort has been the cause of your errors ;—but I fear that these results of a bad education cannot now be gotten rid of, and all we can do is to endeavor to *curb* the propensities which we cannot wholly remove.”

“Heigho !” cried Lady Jane, “I fear what you say is just. But don't you think, Lady Anne, the safest way would be to put me, not into a house of absolute luna-



tics, but in a receptacle for those who are only half and half?"

"But there is no such place."

"Very true, Anne, and I fear that there never *can* be; for the demand for such houses, if once begun, would be so *great*, that there would never be found hands enough to build, nor ground enough to build upon. But a truce with reflection and satire, and let me dress for the opera. Yet, no; I have a confession to make," she added, her beautiful eyes suddenly filling with tears, "which has long weighed on my mind. The forgetfulness of *self*, which was taught you in childhood, has distinguished you in every action of your riper years; and that consideration of self which was taught *me* in childhood, has shown itself, in many serious instances, in my matured life."

"Well, Jane—but this is no new confession."

"No; but have patience. Alas! dear unsuspecting Anne, no sooner did I see that Percy preferred you, than my jealousy of you took fire, and though I did not love Percy, I could not bear that he should love you better than me.

"The consequence was, that I left no art untried when he returned from abroad, to convince him that I was deeply impressed in his favor; and as I felt no real tenderness, it was easy for me to affect it in my manner; while *you*, too conscious to dare to let your real feelings be known, wrapt yourself up in coldness and reserve, till the poor youth, fancying you almost disliked him, sought refuge in my inviting smiles and obvious partiality."

"Why do you tell me this?" exclaimed Lady Anne much agitated; "It can do me no good."

"No; but it relieves my mind; and Oh! Anne, grudge me not this relief, for a severe retributive justice has overtaken me; and the heart of Percy, whom I now love as he ought to be loved, is at length estranged from me by my faults, and attracted towards you by those virtues which, but for my base selfishness, would have rendered him happy." So saying she rushed out of the room,

leaving Lady Anne resolved that she would return to Green Rock as soon as ever she could.

But the jealous pangs of Lady Jane were soon lost in others of a more terrible, though not so bitter and corrosive a nature.

Who can say where the consequences of a wrong action will end? A criminal or an erroneous act is like an arrow winged out of sight; no one knows whither it is gone, nor whom it may wound. It was impossible for a Lord Lorimer not to boast of having had a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer, of whom he now chose to profess himself deeply enamoured.

“A visit, and alone!”

“Yes, that is to say attended only by her servants.”

“You are a happy fellow! I did not even know she was in town.”

“Very likely not; mine was the first house she drove to.”

“I can’t believe it,” said one.—“This is one of your boasts,” said another.—However, at last, one gentleman who heard it, and who hated Lord Lorimer, thought proper to tell Percy what he had heard. Percy immediately exclaimed, “it must be false; Lady Anne Mortimer could never degrade herself so much, nor violate decorum so grossly.”

“But I heard Lord Lorimer assert it; and whether true or false, his prating ought to be put a stop to.”

“What can I do?—Stay; I will write him a note, asking him whether he did say so and so.”

“Do so.”

And Percy, having despatched his note, received the following answer:

“Dear Sir,

“I certainly *did* say that I had the honor of a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer, as soon as she arrived in town, and attended by servants only; for in so saying I told the truth.

Yours, &c.

“LORIMER.”

“Amazement!” cried Percy, more hurt and more

alarmed than he wished to appear ; for this was no boast ; he was afraid it was some business of Lady Jane's, some wish to serve her that could alone have led her to such a deed ; and telling his friend Colonel Rothrie that he would be back very soon, he went to interrogate Lady Anne herself. Luckily he found her alone. And after some vague, embarrassed conversation, he said, "Oh! *apropos*,—a gentleman told me what I could not believe, that you had paid a visit to that coxcomb Lord Lorimer, and attended only by servants."

"And did the gentleman believe it?" said Lady Anne, struggling to appear calm.

"Oh no! it has been much talked of, but nobody believed it."

"I thought so," said Lady Anne, proudly.

"I knew the world was generally just, and that it would not be ready to believe a tale to the prejudice of Lady Anne Mortimer!"

"Then it is not true ; and you did not call at Lord Lorimer's."

"I did not say so," replied Lady Anne turning pale.

"O heaven!" cried Percy turning pale also, "then you *did* call on him! and I am sure that nothing but the necessity of doing some great kindness to my unhappy wife could have led you to do so strange a thing."

"I had Mr Moreton, a very respectable man, with me the whole time or rather in sight ; therefore, though he is my servant in one sense, he is a gentleman, and my Lord Lorimer tells a falsehood in saying I was attended only by servants."

"You evade answering my question,—*Why* did you go to Lord Lorimer's?"

"Mr Percy," replied Lady Anne, "I am not accountable to *you* for my actions, nor will I answer a question which I deny your right to ask."

"It is very well—very well," replied Percy, "I shall know in time ;" and rushing out of the room, he hastened into the street, and rejoined Colonel Rothrie.

"'Tis indeed true," said he, "Lady Anne owns it.—"

What shall I now do?—He is a scoundrel for mentioning her visit, and I suspect I have more reasons than one for calling him to account.”

“ You have heard the other report then ? ”

“ No ;—What is it ? ”

“ That Lady Jane has lost a large sum to him, and that the gentleman does not wish to be paid either in gold or notes ;—but I dare say it is only talk . ”

Percy struck his forehead as if in agony, and having called for pen, ink, and paper, immediately wrote to demand of Lord Lorimer on what pretence Lady Anne called on him. The answer was this :

“ SIR,

“ I have not told nor will I tell the reason which induced Lady Anne Mortimer to honor me with a visit. I cannot do it as a MAN OF HONOR. “ LORIMER.”

This letter provoked a reply from Percy in which he asked Lord Lorimer if it was acting like a *man of honor*, to boast that he had received a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer attended only by her *servants* ; when the fact was that she was accompanied by a respectable gentleman who alighted with her.—When once an angry correspondence takes place between men of the world, the consequences are usually obvious and unavoidable ; and in a short time a challenge was given and accepted, and the time and place of meeting appointed. But it was not without many “ compunctious visitings of conscience,” that Percy complied with what he considered as the indisputable commands of worldly honor, and prepared to risk the valuable life of a husband and a father, against the weapon of a thoughtless profligate, one who might have said in the words of Orlando, “ If killed, I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me ;—only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.”—Besides, he found it impossible to conceal from himself that his resentment against Lord Lorimer was occasioned more by a feeling of jealousy of *Lady Anne*, than of *Lady Jane* ;—and that his thirst of vengeance was excited not so much by

Lord Lorimer's reported designs on his wife, as by his now avowed admiration of her admirable cousin. "I will not return home this evening, till I am sure my children are in bed," said Percy to himself, as he leaned in mournful thought on a table in the coffee house whence he had despatched the fatal notes to Lord Lorimer; "for, if I were to see them again with the consciousness that I saw them possibly for the last time, my agitation would certainly betray me.—No! nor will I return till I think Jane and Lady Anne are both retired for the night." And he kept his resolution,—but in vain; for he found Lady Anne reading in the drawing room, and when he saw her he started with the conscious confusion of guilt; while Lady Anne, aware that something was the matter with him, regarded him with looks of anxious inquiry.

"How is Jane," said he; "my dear cousin?"

"Very unwell, and gone to bed."

"Indeed!" he replied. "Then I shall continue to sleep where I have done since her illness, lest I disturb her." And so far her illness was convenient. Soon after, catching Lady Anne's eyes fixed upon him, he started up, unable to bear their expression, and ran out of the room. He then went softly into Lady Jane's apartment; and as she was in a sound sleep, he gazed on her some minutes, wishing but not daring to imprint a kiss on her flushed and fevered cheek; till, fearful of being surprised while thus indulging his feelings, he suddenly left the room, and shut himself up in his own apartment, whence he returned no more that night. Therefore Lady Anne, whose fears were dreadfully excited, had no means of ascertaining whether they were just or not, and she went to bed in a state of great agitation.

Alarming thoughts kept Lady Anne awake all night, and she had not closed her eyes, when, being alive to every noise, she heard some one go softly down stairs at six o'clock in the morning, open the hall door, and go out. She instantly ran to the window, and saw Percy and Colonel Rothrie walk to a hackney-coach which waited at a little distance, and which drove

off with them very rapidly. "Then all my fears are realized, and he is gone to meet Lord Lorimer!" she exclaimed, beginning to dress herself with almost frantic haste, though when dressed she knew not how to act, nor how to prevent the meeting which she feared.—"But why should I thus torment myself with apprehensions that may be groundless?" thought Lady Anne; "Percy may be gone out as second only to Colonel Rothrie!" But when she recollected his question concerning her visit to Lord Lorimer, and his evident dejection of the preceding evening, she felt that her alarm was only too well founded, and she threw herself on her bed in an agony of grief. The next moment she started up, resolved to hasten to the Park, for she recollected to have heard that duels were usually fought there. But she immediately gave up this wild idea, remembering how improper, and how fatal to the reputation of a man, is female interference on such occasions; and summoning all her self command, she determined on the fortitude of remaining perfectly quiet and inactive; that difficult task when the mind is anxious and agitated, but which, generally speaking, is the most frequent and *becoming* duty of woman. Still, however, when the clock struck seven, Lady Anne could remain inactive no longer; but throwing her veil over her head she ran down stairs; and telling the porter she was going to take a turn in the Park, she hastened thither in a state of almost frantic anxiety, and turned down the path that led towards the Serpentine River. Suddenly her haste was impeded, and even her breath suspended, for she heard the sound of pistols; and in a terror that nearly deprived her of her sense, she clung to the railing near her for support, unable to proceed, yet equally incapable of remaining where she was. At length, however, she made a violent effort, and ran rapidly towards the spot whence the sound had proceeded. But long before she was near enough to be recognised herself by any one on the banks of the water, she saw a gentleman advancing, whom she instantly knew to be Percy, and evidently in perfect safety! It was enough! and

uttering "Thank God! he lives! he is safe!" Lady Anne, ashamed of her emotion, and afraid of being seen and known, turned back, and endeavored to leave the Park as rapidly as she entered it. But this was impossible; tears, amounting to sobs, impeded her power of motion, and she was forced to lean against the same rail for support under the agonies of joy, which she had so lately leaned against in all the misery of apprehension. But while she did so, she turned round again, in order to make "assurance doubly sure" that Percy was unhurt; and then she plainly saw Lord Lorimer, supported by two gentlemen, evidently wounded, though able to walk, while Percy and Colonel Rothrie were walking by his side. Lady Anne had seen enough to quiet her alarms entirely, for Percy was not only safe himself, but apparently he had not endangered the existence of another; and invigorated by this consciousness she pressed rapidly forward, nor did she stop again till she reached home. But, alas! when she re-entered the house, such tidings awaited her, as banished from her mind even the sense of joy excited there by the safety of Percy.

By a most unfortunate coincidence, a favorite little dog of Lady Jane's had that morning followed some one into the street, and was brought home worried to death, just as one of the house-maids, who had seen her master go out and drive off in a hackney coach, was conferring with Ellis on this subject at the door of Lady Jane's apartment. It so happened that this woman had lived in a family, the master of which, while she was servant there, had been brought home killed in a duel; and having observed Lady Anne's alarmed and mournful expression, when she passed her on the stairs in her way to the Park, she had little difficulty in persuading herself that Percy was gone to fight a duel, and that Lady Anne knew and suspected his intentions; and she was communicating her fears to Ellis, when a bustle in the hall made her break off, and run towards the gallery leading to the stairs. The noise proceeded from the servants, who were gathered round the body of the poor little dog,

which was just now brought home by a neighbor, and the house maid reached the gallery just as one of the servants exclaimed, "Yes! he is killed! quite killed! What will my poor Lady say?"—This was enough for the house-maid, whose fears for her master were already excited; and hastening back to Ellis, who was just going into Lady Jane's room to answer her bell which had that moment rung, she exclaimed, "I was right, he is killed! my poor master! he is killed! my poor master!"

As her door was open, Lady Jane distinctly heard these words; and springing out of bed, she saw by the countenances of her two servants that her ears had not deceived her. The whole truth immediately rushed on her maddening brain. Percy on her account had challenged Lord Lorimer, and she had been the means of destroying her husband!!! She fainted, tottered, and fell; and in a few hours, amidst dreadful convulsions and in a state of utter unconsciousness, she gave birth to a dead child, and her life was despaired of.

Her danger and her sufferings called back all Percy's tenderness towards her, though his esteem was he feared irrecoverable; and when he considered that her life would in all probability fall a sacrifice to her affection for him, and agony for his supposed death, he scarcely knew how to endure the contrariety of his feelings,—and he was never easy except when hanging over her pillow and lavishing on the unconscious sufferer fond but mournful caresses. From that restless pillow, from that unconscious sufferer, Lady Anne never, never stirred. The cause of her sufferings, and her danger, endeared her to her heart still more. Percy's presence, Percy's influence were no longer felt or dreaded by her; her thoughts, her looks were fixed on one darling object alone, whose errors, serious as they were, were forgotten, while only her charms and her virtues lived in her remembrance; and Lady Anne, still herself in every situation, now shone in the new character of an affectionate and untired nurse. At length her anxiety was repaid by the recovery, the rapid recovery, of the object of it; for in one month after



her life had been despaired of, Lady Jane, though still very weak, was able to be in her drawing-room. When she was thus far advanced towards convalescence, Percy begged Lady Anne to inform her of the duel, and its cause, in hopes that a consciousness of the danger in which her errors had involved her husband, would have a salutary effect on her conduct in future.

This was the first time that the subject of the duel had ever been mentioned, and Lady Anne took that opportunity of asking Percy whether the dispute with Lord Lorimer was not chiefly on her account; and on Percy's answering in the affirmative, she replied, "I needed no champion, Mr Percy. I am myself the guardian of my honor! and strong in an unblemished life, I can defy the calumnies of any one.—Surely, surely then," she added, with more tenderness of voice and manner, "you will not think it necessary, when Lord Lorimer recovers, to risk again so needlessly a life so precious?"

But to this direct question Percy gave an evasive answer, and all Lady Anne's fears were again excited. In consequence of which, she wrote a letter to Lord Lorimer unknown to Percy, which, much to his honor, induced him to write such an apology to Lady Anne for having boasted of her visit, and such a note to Percy as would have precluded any necessity for even a professed duellist to call him out again; and it was judged expedient, both by Percy and Lady Anne, that, in order to prevent unpleasant reports and surmises, Lord Lorimer should be received at the house as usual, as an occasional guest.

Lady Anne, when all was thus amicably settled, disclosed the whole affair to Lady Jane; but she had the mortification of seeing, that though her cousin's agonies at the recital nearly amounted to frenzy, no hope, or expectation, seemed awakened in her mind of being able to conduct herself so as to avoid similar errors in future; for, too honest to feign the hope she felt not, Lady Jane never once said "I will reform, I will profit by my past bitter experience."

One day as Percy and Lady Anne were sitting with the children, Lady Jane returned from her morning's drive, and entered the room with a very grave countenance; then, sending the little boys away, she said she wished to talk with Percy on business of importance.

"I come," said she, "from my uncle the minister, from my cousin ditto, and my uncle the bishop, on a deputation to *you*, Percy."

"Indeed! Well; open your credentials."

"My relations well know all the kindness you have ever shown me; for, in order to set you off in your true light, believe me I have never spared myself."

"That I believe indeed," said Percy, pressing her hand. "That we are sure of," said Lady Anne kindly.

"Therefore, they feel themselves bound in gratitude to do something, if they CAN, to mend the fortune I have tried to *mar*; and thus then they speak through *me*. They know you wish for the Albany peerage, though you shrink from the trouble of suing for it. It shall be yours, without suing for it,—yours by creation,—and they offer you your choice of the places now vacant by certain high resignations; or the embassy, now to dispose of also, to the Ottoman Porte; which if you accept, as I earnestly hope you will, I shall have an opportunity of shining forth another Lady Mary Wortley Montague in 'letters addressed to the Lady A—— M——.' These ~~are~~ offers made warm from the heart; for most eagerly do ministers, whether my relations or not, wish to be joined by a man of your talents and weight in the House."

"No doubt," said Lady Anne. But Percy was slow to reply; at last he said, "You well know, Jane, that I honor both the talents and integrity of your relations, as men; but as I have the misfortune to differ with them on two or three essential points; I must, however my pride, my ambition, and my wants may urge me to accept their offers, most unequivocally, though alas most *unwillingly*, reject them."

"O! how I rejoice!" cried Lady Anne. "And I grieve," said Lady Jane, "for *I* am no *politician*."

“Nor I neither, Jane,” returned Lady Anne, “and I think the term when applied to a woman is a term of reproach. But if I were a wife, I should value my husband’s political integrity were he Whig or Tory, equal with his life, and should wish the one to be resigned only with the other. Therefore, as Percy, without an utter surrender of his political character, cannot accept these offers, I rejoice that he has rejected them; for it would indeed be a severe blow to me to be forced to forego the exalted idea of him which I now entertain.”

“Thank ye, thank ye, my noble minded friend!” cried Percy with great emotion.

“Aye! and could you have said noble minded *wife* too,” said Lady Jane mournfully, “you would not have been in a situation to have felt such offers temptations. Would I had died when I could unconsciously have breathed my last! Why did you try, why did you *wish* to save me? It would have been better for us all, if you had let me die.” Here she gave way to an agony of distress, which gave exquisite pain to the hearts of her auditors.

“Jane, this must not be. You have no right,” said Percy, “to distress us thus.”

“No right! Have I no right to feel my own unworthiness—and, feeling, to deplore it?”

“Stop!” said Lady Anne, willing to turn the course of her ideas—“an idea has just struck me;—Is it *true*, Percy, that your affairs are in such a state as to make offers of this kind tempting to you?”

“They are indeed. My West-India estates have lately yielded little or nothing, and, and”—“I will fill up the sentence,” cried Lady Jane, “he has had to pay unexpected sums for me!” “Then hear me,” replied Lady Anne, “the *best* of us may yield in a moment of unexpected weakness to strong temptation. As an Archbishop Cranmer yielded to it, who can say that he shall always be proof against it?”

“True!” replied Percy sighing; “and who should therefore presume severely to blame another who has been found frail?”

"Well, then ; I can without a single pang give up my establishment at Green Rock, and retire into some cheap part of England on one third of my income. The rest I conjure you to appropriate to the gradual payment of your debts ; and pay me when—"

"Hold !" cried Percy, "Nor insult us so much as to suppose, if retrenchment be necessary, that it shall not be made by *us* ; not *you*. No, generous woman ! It is my intention to give up my town house next year ; and, if I continue in parliament, to come to a lodging when my presence is necessary ; and this arrangement will, I trust, in a year or two set me free entirely."

"This arrangement !" cried Lady Jane ; "and have you then fixed your plans without consulting me?"

"May I ask your ladyship," said Percy, "if after what has passed you can think you have any *right* to be consulted?"

"Oh no, no, no—forgive me ! I know my own unworthiness. So then you prefer this scheme," said she recovering herself, "to acceptance of the offer I brought you!"

"Most assuredly."

"I am glad of it ; as glad as Lady Anne ; for if you had accepted it I know I should never have liked you so well again. I remember when I was a child I spent all my little money on a fine dress of my own invention for my doll, destroying the one it wore when I bought it ; and I procured some gold leaf too to cover its nose and its cheeks with ; and when I had thus made "a thing of my own," I never liked it as well as I did in its original state. And thus, had I made Percy a minister, and smeared him over with the gold leaf of places and privileges, I should never have liked him so well again, as I did when he was the independent man I first knew him. O my dearest husband ! how glad I am that you have integrity, though I have none!"

"What you have just said, Jane, proves the contrary, and that virtue, though spell-bound, is not *dead* within you."

“But my dear Anne, if it never breaks the spell, it might as well be dead, you know.” Here she burst into a long laugh, which almost alarmed Percy and her cousin. When it was over, she said, “A very charming idea has just struck me, my dear Percy,—I want you to sit to —— for a fancy portrait. But no, I forgot, you have no picture-money. However, Lady Anne has, and she will be very glad to pay for it; and the subject shall be Hercules between Pleasure and Virtue—that is *you* just now between Anne and me. Here was I, Pleasure you know, tempting you with places and embassies and all manner of fine things, Turkish beauties, and what not! and there was Anne, with her fine sentiments, and morals, and heroics, bidding you be a good boy, and not listen to naughty women!”

“I am glad to see you can be so merry, Jane,” said Lady Anne.

“Merry!” cried Lady Jane.

“Well; light-hearted if you will.”

“Light-hearted! O the weight of such lightness?”

‘I laugh’d; but ’faith I am not light of soul;  
And he who most Misfortune’s scourge has felt,  
Will tell you, Laughter is the child of Misery.’\*

My mirth is embroidery on a *pall*; it is a gay and glittering mantle wrapped round a corpse. O Anne! Is the brilliancy of lightning wholesome? Is the hectic of fever healthy? Are these faded cheeks, these hollow eyes, signs of mirth and light-heartedness? Nay, *mock* me not, my cousin! But check those tears, Anne; I deserve them not. Gracious Heaven! what a contrast!” (seeing her own face and Lady Anne’s together, in the glass.) “Look at that cheek—even, pure, and wholesome as the mind to which it belongs; and yet it is an older cheek than mine! Anne, indeed I am very generous not to hate you.”

“Jane! I must interfere,” cried Percy;—“you distress your cousin, and me too. My dear love you are

\* See Miss Baillie’s Plays.

very nervous and irritable today, and fanciful;—I doubt that—”

“Yes, you are right; I am under the influence of a strong opiate. Dearest Anne! compose yourself,” she added; but Lady Anne hastily quitted the room. “Nor is the contrast in person, greater than in mind,” continued Lady Jane. “How strange it is! The only wish of her pure and innocent heart was disappointed, yet *she* had not recourse to dissipation or vice. She did not fit herself to exclaim with the poet:—

‘—All this giddy waste of years;—  
This tiresome round of palling pleasures!  
Hadst thou been mine, had all been hush’d,  
This cheek, now pale with early riot,  
With passion’s hectic ne’er had flush’d,  
But bloom’d in calm domestic quiet!’

while I, happy in every granted wish of mine, I could not exist without taking drams forsooth!”

“Drams?”

“Aye, drams;—what is gaming but a mental dram—an alternation of hope and fear, which the disappointed and the wretched fly to, men and women, sated and sick of every thing, in order to give them that artificial interest which their feelings are become incapable of? But I was not disappointed—I was happy;—‘blessed beyond my sex’s charter;’ and yet I gamed, and yet I squandered money! and yet I wasted the most precious years of life in heartless dissipation! O why did you save me from an unconscious death? for, if I am conscious, my death-bed will be a dreadful one.”

“My dear Jane,” said Percy, “this distressing agitation is the result of too frequent stimuli and want of sleep, and I *insist* on your lying down and trying to compose yourself.”

“But will you stay with me? will you watch by me as in our happier days?”

“Yes, I will—I will do my duty, Jane.”

“Your duty! O Percy! your duty was your pleasure once!”

“ And is now, dear, captious, suspicious being !”

“ And you will sit by me ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Then perhaps I may once more sleep quietly.” And Percy had soon the satisfaction of seeing her sink into a tolerably composed slumber.

Such scenes as the foregoing now frequently took place ; and sometimes when Percy and her cousin urged her to retire with them and the children to Green Rock, and give up the dissipation into which she was again plunging, she very justly replied, “ I know and feel the value of these rational and virtuous pleasures, which you hold out to me ; but I have now no power of enjoying them. Rich meats, fine fruits, and choice wines are delicious things ; but, if one has lost one’s taste or one’s digestion, they are offered to our lip in vain ;—and so it is with me. My pursuits compared to yours, are as sour small beer to pure Burgundy ! But, if I can only digest the former, I must persist to refuse the latter. You should have let me *die* ; and that would have been better for us all ;—and yet, and yet ! After death comes judgment, Anne ! And how does my account stand ? ”

Though Lady Anne’s rigid principles made her wish to withdraw herself from the society of Percy, she gave up all idea of leaving Lady Jane while she continued in her present state of mind, because she did not think it right that Lady Jane should be left to the painful influence of her own corroding reflections ; nor could she give up all hope of awakening her, in some moment of self-reproach, to strong and effective efforts towards amendment ; so difficult is it for affection to relinquish the cheering expectation of reforming its object,—so prone is it to hope on, till a resistless conviction flashes on the soul, that the reformation, at first *improbable* perhaps, is now, even to the sanguine eye of love become *impossible*.

But in order to explain the events that are soon to follow, I must go back to a fete given a few months before her illness by Lady Jane. I have before said that her taste was unrivalled, and her expenditure to gratify it

unbounded. An inner apartment, in which supper was to be served for the——, was converted into an entire bower of roses—and roses so natural in their appearance, and at a distance even in their fragrance, especially as real ones were mixed with them, that the eye and even the smell were deceived. She had bespoken these admirable flowers of her great man on such occasions, and he had procured them from a poor man near the Seven Dials, who had been taught to make them by an indigent Italian, who had lodged at his house, and *died* there. This man whose name was Walters, was the most improper person possible to be employed for a paymaster like Lady Jane, as he always owed his money before he earned it; not so much from extravagance, as from the wish to buy little comforts for his wife, on whom he doted. Walters had seen better days, and his pride had not fallen with his fortunes; he had a virtuous horror, I may call it, both of a workhouse and a prison; but he wanted at the same time that virtuous firmness of character which resists running in debt, as the sure precursor of both. As soon therefore as his money for the flowers was due, he dunned Mr —— for it; and he, knowing Lady Jane would not pay him for years perhaps, refused to advance the smallest sum out of his own pocket, but desired him to go with his demand to Lady Jane herself, and say he sent him. Lady Jane therefore got the bill, accompanied by a statement of great poverty; and she had on this occasion the feeling, and the justice, to go to Percy with the account, which amounted to a considerable sum, as since the fete he had made for her roses and other flowers. Percy immediately gave her the money; but that evening she lost it all at the card table, and the poor wife of Walters was dismissed the next day with *promises* instead of *payment*. Again and again she came, till Ellis once more presented the account to Lady Jane, who started with conscious baseness when she saw it; nor could she be easy till she told Lady Anne the circumstance, and received money to discharge it. But the next morning a tale of wo was



presented to her of a very shocking kind ; and as the general patroness of distress, Lady Jane gave to Charity what she ought to have given to Justice, and Mrs Walters was again dismissed unpaid.—This was certainly an aggravated case ; but still, severe was the retribution.

Poor Walters, oppressed with debts, though two thirds of the money due would have paid them all, continued to dun by turns Mr —— and Lady Jane ; but the latter never heard of his repeated applications, as the rule of the house was, not to trouble their lady till creditors grew very clamorous ; and Mr —— still refused to pay him, because he was not yet paid *himself*. To fruitless dunning soon succeeded the mischievous alternative of *drinking*. The patience of Walters' creditors was at last exhausted ; and one day, when to the temporary exhilaration of dram drinking had succeeded its consequent irritation and exhaustion, two bailiffs entered his now denuded apartment, and produced a writ against him. In vain his wife shrieked, and knelt, and prayed for time ; it could not be granted, and poor Walters must go to prison. They had just been eating their dinner (alas ! their last meal together,) and the table was not cleared.

“ You know, Fanny,” said he, “ I have always said I never would go to prison,—nor will I now ;” and in an instant he cut his throat with the knife with which he had been eating, and sunk a bleeding corpse on the floor.

His wife—but she, I hope, was spared some agonies, even by the violence of those she endured, as all sense was immediately suspended in her, and reason completely overthrown. So that in ten days after her poor husband's suicide she was the inmate of a madhouse ! whence, however, she had been dismissed as cured, at the very time that Lady Jane was first able to visit as usual.

Lady Anne and Percy had at length succeeded, they thought, in calming Lady Jane's mind and convincing her that, if she would but forego her bad habits, she would in time acquire good ones, and that the virtues of

her future life (and she was not yet thirty) would expiate, they trusted, the follies of her youth.

But Lady Jane was not so likely to amend her conduct, as many other women under her circumstances would have been ; because she had those popular virtues which throw a glittering veil over the vices of a character, and thereby bestow on it a false radiance difficult to detect. Lady Jane knew that those errors which had injured her husband's peace and fortune, and lowered her in his esteem, were either not known to the world, or were forgotten in her deeds of charity, her active benevolence, and the fascinations of her person ; and though her heart was wounded by a sense of her faults, it required more strength of mind than she possessed, to break through habits the indulgence of which did not destroy that popularity which was her favorite idol.

Perhaps there are no characters so dangerous in society as those which unite great virtues with great faults, and seduce by the former into imitation or toleration of the latter ; while the unwary imitator, who would have shrunk with aversion from the contagion of errors unaccompanied by the attractions of virtues, becomes a prey to the one unconsciously, by means of the other,—as he, who would on principle reject the alcohol of a dram shop, eagerly and unconsciously swallows the pernicious spirit when hidden in the palatable shape of a *liqueur*.

“ Well, give me only till the season is over,” said Lady Jane one evening, “ and then I will turn hermit and live at Green Rock. And then

‘ ———may I breathe my last,  
Blessed by the tongues that charm'd my youthful ear,  
Mourned by the few my soul acknowledged here,  
Deplored by those in early days allied,  
And unremember'd by the world beside !’

But I am now so much improved in my looks, that I begin to relish society again. See, Anne, don't you think I am very good-looking to night ? But I am not quite dressed yet. When I burst on you in all my glory, I flatter myself you will admire.”

"Poor soul! in all her *glory!* Is *that* a woman's glory?" said Lady Anne to herself; and she was glad to be roused from a painful reverie by the entrance of Percy and the children.

"I thought you were going with Lady Jane," said Percy.—"No—I have a bad headach, and wish to go to rest early," she replied;—when, dressed most becomingly in a robe of white satin, and in a blaze of jewels, Lady Jane entered the room.

"I flatter myself, good people," cried she gaily, "that I am quite beautiful to night.—I have colored my cheeks as like Anne's as possible, and what with judicious displays, and more judicious concealments, I think I am quite the thing."

"You look like a *young* bride, Jane," said Percy.

"If I look *young* I am contented, as I do not wish to be a bride again."

Alas! she was more like a victim dressed for sacrifice.

"Well, my darlings," said she to the boys, "I see you are dazzled by my jewels. But in truth, as the wise Cornelia said, you are my jewels; and I trust that ere long I shall prove by my actions that I think so."

"God speed the time!" cried Percy.—"Amen!" said Lady Anne; while Lady Jane, affectionately kissing her, said with one of her sweetest smiles, "Aye, kind, good Anne, I know I have always your good wishes; and when I deserve your good *word* too, it will be the proudest day of my life."—Percy now interrupted her, to bid her good night, as he must go to the House, being already later than he wished to be. Soon after his departure, her carriage was announced, and Lady Jane took leave of her children and Lady Anne, which she did with much of her former playfulness; and turning back at the door, she kissed her hand smiling as in her happiest hours,—destined alas! to smile no more in this world.—A crowd, as usual, had assembled at the steps, where her carriage usually waited some time, to see Lady Jane get in. She now appeared brilliant and

beautiful as ever, and stopped an instant on the last step, perhaps for the pleasure of displaying herself. At this instant a woman rushed up to her, and almost buried a knife in her body. Lady Jane shrieked and fell, while the incensed populace seized the assassin, and one of the servants drew the knife out of the wound.

Lady Anne had luckily just sent the boys to bed, who had been allowed as a frolic to sit up till eleven;—for the shriek reached her ears, and she flew rapidly into the hall. Alas! what a sight met her view! That beloved being, who had so lately left her radiant with conscious loveliness, and full of renewed hope of happiness to come, now bleeding and motionless, borne on the servant's arms, and probably in the very agonies of death! A deep groan burst from Lady Anne, which roused the senses of the sufferer; and Lady Jane, opening her eyes, recognised the pale and agonized countenance which bent over her in tearless, speechless sorrow; and shaking her head mournfully, she motioned to lay her head on her bosom. Jennings, meanwhile, had ordered the coachman to drive full speed to the House for his master, but only to say an accident had happened to his lady.

"What is to be done with the murderer, my lady?" said one of the servants to Lady Anne.

"Murderer!" cried she shuddering.

"Yes, my lady,—this is she," and Lady Jane involuntarily following the direction of his eyes, saw a poor wild wretched looking woman held between two men.

"Take that woman away! take her away! the sight of her distracts me!" said Lady Anne with a scream of horror; and she was taken into a room below.

"Who is she, do you know?" murmured Lady Jane, who as yet resisted their wishes to carry her up stairs.

"I don't know who she is, my lady, but she says her name is Walters."

"Walters!" muttered Lady Jane, "Walters! I should know . . ." and suddenly recollecting her debt to the

poor flower man, she hid her face in Lady Anne's bosom, and groaned piteously.

"Do, dearest Jane, let us remove you up stairs," said Lady Anne.

"No,—lest I bleed to death before Percy comes." Nor, when a surgeon arrived, would she allow herself to be examined till Percy came.

Percy had left Lady Jane that evening with much of his former tenderness towards her renewed. She had looked more like her former self than she had lately done. She had promised well, too; she had looked and spoken like a mother; and ever apt to regard the bright side of every thing, he had, on his way to the House, felt happier and more satisfied with his wife and his prospects than he had done for years . . . when, on his approaching the house, he was met by a man who told him his carriage was waiting for him. Alarmed he knew not why, he rushed hastily forward, exclaiming, "John what is the matter?"

"My lady, sir," replied the man, scarcely able to speak, "an accident to my lady!" And Percy, not daring to ask more, was driven home in a state of terrible anxiety. But his wildest fears could not have imagined a more dreadful scene than awaited him on his entrance to that home, which he had quitted so full of joyful expectation, and his feelings were still more agonized by what he heard from the crowd at the door.

"Percy is come!" whispered Lady Anne, averting her eyes from the overcoming agony of Percy's look, while with an exclamation of horror he rushed forward to clasp the poor victim in his arms. "Oh! who has done this?" exclaimed he, dreading to be told that it was the hand of revenge.

"A mad person," replied Lady Anne, "who is in custody; but more of that hereafter. She would not be moved or examined till you came, and Oh! the time has been very long!!"

"Let Percy carry me," faltered out Lady Jane; and his scalding tears fell on her bosom, while he bore her

in his trembling arms to her own apartment. Lady Jane was right; the motion, slight as it was, made the blood gush out afresh, and she fainted before she was laid on the bed. By this time two of the first surgeons in London were arrived, whom Lady Anne had sent for; and having cut away her dress, the wound was examined. It was deep, but they hoped not mortal; yet there was great danger to be apprehended, danger of a mortification. Meanwhile Lady Jane had recovered from her swoon, but her countenance wore the settled habit of despair; and Percy, unable to bear the scene, left the room for a while. It then occurred to him that it was right he should interrogate the murderer; and though Jennings violently opposed his doing it, he was resolved, and went into the room below. "A woman!" exclaimed he, averting his head with agony from the being who had perhaps murdered his wife; "What, poor wretch! could lead you to such a crime?"

"She is mad, dear sir," said Jennings eagerly.

"Yes,—I am mad," replied she, "but then who made me so? My Lady Percy!"

Percy started, but said, "Go on—who are you?"

"I am nobody now, and have nothing; but I was once Walters the flower-maker's happy wife;—for he was the best of husbands."

"And where is he?" asked Percy.

"In heaven, I hope, though he did cut his throat rather than go to prison, because my Lady Percy would not pay him, and so he ran in debt!"

Here, if Jennings had not supported him, Percy would have fallen on the ground; and the woman went on, for he could not interrupt her.—"Well,—I saw him die; and for two months I was, I fancy, dead too,—but I came to life again, and went home,—to a home without Walters; but as soon as I got settled, he appeared to me; but I won't tell what he said, though I did as he bade me,—and that very night amongst some rubbish I found the very knife he used to kill himself. Oh! says I, this is what he meant;—so I hid it in my bosom, for I

knew a use for it,—and I did as Walters bade me, and I revenged him, for I have killed Lady Percy.”

Percy could bear no more, and was rushing out of the room ; but making a great effort, he turned back, saying, “ See that she is kindly and humanely treated, for the poor creature is certainly insane.” True ; but he felt only too bitterly that she had “ method in her madness,” and he well recollected giving Lady Jane money to pay Walters a flower-man.

The poor woman had, on her return home, found by accident the knife her husband had used in his suicide ; and the sight of it having upset her reason again, her bewildered brain had fancied she saw Walters, and that he told her to kill Lady Jane, and with that same weapon.

It was certainly with increased agony that Percy returned into his wife’s apartment, who was now undressed, and lying composedly in her bed,—while Lady Anne, white and motionless as a statue, stood gazing on her in mournful silence.

“ Let me speak to you one moment,” said Percy, alarmed at her death-like appearance, and Lady Anne suffered him to lead her from the bed. “ Do you not remember the name of Walters, a flower-man, who made those beautiful roses for one of the poor soul’s fetes ? ”

“ I do,—but I also know that this bill was paid, for I gave her money to pay it.”

“ Aye—and so did I ; but depend upon it, it was never paid.”

“ No ! ”

“ Though the poor woman be mad, her story is but too probable ! ”

“ No, no ; I will hear no more,” said Lady Anne, turning very faint, and laying her head on Lady Jane’s pillow. Percy, too restless to be stationary, and anxious to know the truth, now went in search of Ellis, and interrogated her so closely, that Ellis, bursting into tears, confirmed all the woman had said ; adding that, though she knew the end of the unhappy Walters, she had carefully kept it from Lady Jane, for she well knew how it would afflict her.

“Dreadful!” said Percy to himself, “what a fate is mine! for I must in justice and humanity maintain through her future existence the being who has deprived my wife of hers! Yet I must do it; must where I can, atone for the errors of the wretched Jane!”

Percy now returned to the apartment of the sufferer, but he forbore to name to Lady Anne what he saw she wished to remain ignorant of. That night Lady Jane, though she did not sleep, lay quiet and silent, except that every now and then she groaned dreadfully; and when Lady Anne, who never moved from her, tenderly inquired whether it was pain from the wound that occasioned her to groan, she shook her head, and faintly murmured; “Pain of the mind! Pain of the mind!” Percy meanwhile wandered from room to room, too wretched to sit still, and too anxious concerning his unhappy wife to think of endeavoring to take repose.

Early in the morning the surgeons came again, and seemed to think unfavorably of the appearance of the wound, while Lady Jane fixed her eager eyes on their face as if she would read their every thought. When they had ended their consultation, Lady Anne followed them out to ask their real opinion, and Lady Jane was therefore left alone with the physician who attended with them. “I cannot make out entirely,” said Lady Jane in a sort of whisper to him, “who it was that thus wounded me; do you know, sir? for I feel that I should be much easier if I knew the whole truth, as then I should be spared these ever restless conjectures;” and the physician not suspecting that she had a clue to Mrs Walters’ bloody deed which he had not, and feeling that anguish and restlessness in her situation must be mischievous, told her that a mad woman of the name of Walters had wounded her; a poor woman who had gone mad in consequence of seeing her husband cut his throat to avoid going to prison for debt. And as soon as he had said this, he saw Lady Jane hide her face in the bed-clothes, and heard her utter groans to which he could not endure to listen, till Lady Anne overhearing her ran into the room,



with a face even of more woe than she had when she quitted it. As soon as the physician was gone, Lady Jane slowly and with great effort told her, she found her suspicions true, and that it had been *blood for blood*;—nor could Lady Anne's declarations of ignorance on the subject, which were literally true, at all weaken Lady Jane's horrible but just convictions. "Let me unburthen my mind to some one," said she. "Shall I send for your uncle?" asked Lady Anne.—"No!" she replied, "I will see him before I die, but I will not shock his affections and wound his pride by unveiling to him the whole of his niece's delinquency." But before any clergyman could arrive, a violent delirium came on, and her children whom she had wished to see were forbidden to enter.

What were not the agonies of Percy and Lady Anne, to find that the images uppermost in her mind were the self-murdered Walters and his frantic wife! "Look! there they are!" she exclaimed, "Take them away! take them away!" while she pathetically prayed her husband and her cousin to shield her from their wrath, and from their just retribution.

Alas! while she was thus severely expiating the result of error, which, though not leading to intentional guilt, yet from its pernicious magnitude was as dreadful in its consequence as guilt which had been intended, the newspapers were full of loud laments for her danger, and loud execrations of her assassin. The sonneteer wrote and published verses declaring the probable extinction of such a luminary as Lady Jane Percy to be as much to be dreaded as that of the sun himself; for that her bounty and influence, like his, diffused happiness and plenty on all around her; while relations, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, thronged her door from night till morning with inquiries after her situation; and even the gayest assemblies were rendered gloomy, by the appearance in every corner of the room of groups evidently formed to discuss the mournful fate of the once certain ornament and delight of every scene that she honored with her presence; and on her table at home, the eye of the unhappy

and conscious husband was continually met by books, in the first page of which he read a dedication praising Lady Jane Percy as the most exalted, most benevolent, and most spotless of her sex ; till maddened by what to him appeared mockery at such a moment, he used to dash the lying pages with indignation on the ground.

But if it was agony to them to witness Lady Jane's delirium, it was even tenfold pain to watch beside her dying bed when delirium had subsided, when mortification had actually taken place, when returning sense, and absence from pain, proclaimed her dissolution near, and she was at her own earnest desire assured that her fate was inevitable.

"And is it really so? And must I die?" she violently exclaimed; "I, who am so ill prepared for death! I, who have wasted what all the good value and improve in vicious pleasures, and neglect of positive duties!"

"Jane, Jane; have mercy on me!" said Percy, falling on his knees beside her, and kissing her clenched hand, clenched with the agony of her soul. "Look at your poor cousin! see how she suffers—and do not torture us thus."

"Suffers! she suffers! Why the greatest sufferings of virtue like hers, are pleasures to the pangs I feel from the consciousness of guilt! Do you forget," she wildly added, "that there is *blood* upon my conscience?"

"These are the ravings of a distempered imagination, dearest Jane. Do yourself justice! Remember your virtues as well as your failings! Remember you have been a fond, faithful wife!"

"And with such a husband that was great merit, was it not?" she said with an ironical smile. Here she paused; for a sudden alteration took place in her countenance, and Lady Anne's ever watchful eye read in it the approaches of death.

"Quick, quick," cried Lady Jane, "send for my uncle! let me—let me—have his prayers in my last moments!" And Ellis ran into the apartment below to fetch both her uncles, who in mournful silence were waiting to attend the death bed of one who had ever been the pride and

often the charm of their existence. But they arrived too late. Lady Jane again deplored her past life, her waste of time, her neglect of her cousin's precepts and example, the distress she had occasioned both to her and to her husband; when, suddenly seizing Lady Anne's hand, she exclaimed, "Pray for me! pray for me, Anne, I am dying! and Oh! how full of dread! how full of reluctance! Yet, let me die performing one just deed."— Then putting Lady Anne's hand in that of Percy's, she joined and pressed them together, and tried to express her wishes and her meaning. But the power of utterance was gone; and pressing their united hands to her cold, clammy lips, she seemed, as she raised her eyes to Heaven, to murmur an inward prayer; and sinking back on her pillow she expired without a groan.

## AUSTIN AND HIS WIFE.

---

THERE are few truths, perhaps, of which we want to be more frequently reminded by striking and alarming illustrations than those with which we are the best acquainted.

We are all such self deluders, as to be apt to fancy that what we have long known, and admitted in theory, we must necessarily never deviate from in practice. Hence nothing is more common than to hear habitual violaters of truth express the most virtuous horror of falsehood, till some dire result of their mischievous propensity, or some warning example, teaches them to look into themselves, and learn, though usually too late, that it is one thing to admire right rules of acting, and another to act rightly. There never was a parent probably who did not highly approve those golden rules of action laid down for us in the apologues called *Æsop's fables*;—no mother ever read without conviction as well as horror the tale of the thief who bit off his mother's ear before he ascended the scaffold; or perused without thoroughly assenting to it, the wise application at the end of that warning tale which says—“It is a mistaken notion in people when they imagine that there is no occasion for restraining or regulating the actions of very young children, which though allowed to be wrong in those of a more advanced age, are in them, they suppose, altogether innocent and inoffensive. But however innocent they may be as to their intention *then*, yet as the practice may grow upon them unobserved, and root itself into a *habit*, they ought

to be checked in their *first efforts* towards any thing that is *injurious* and *dishonest*."

These are truths to which every one who reads implicitly subscribes, and the united world agree "that just as the twig is bent the tree 's inclined;" still, how many of those who thus subscribe and thus admire, allow their offspring, uncorrected by judicious reproof, and undeterred by proper punishment, to indulge habits of lying, fraud, and every thing that makes the child odious, and may make the man dishonest and detestable, till he might, like the thief in the fable, inflict horrible justice on his weak or neglectful parents; who by suffering a first fault to go unpunished, encouraged him to form habits of wickedness which ended in misery and destruction!

"It is strange," said Brograve, an intelligent but odd-tempered tradesman in the town of L—, to Austin, a shop keeper in the same place,— "It is strange that you and I, who agree so well on all other subjects, should disagree so much on the subject of education."

"In the means we certainly disagree," replied Austin; "but our end is the same, and the aim of both is to make our sons valuable members of the community."

"True," returned Brograve, "and I, believing that fear is one of the most powerful of all passions, think that children are only to be frightened into good habits, while you imagine that *indulgence* is all in all."

"No such thing,—I think the extreme of indulgence and the extreme of severity are equally unfavorable."

"Then why do you spoil Edwin?"

"I deny that I *do* spoil him."

"But you suffer your wife to spoil him, and that is nearly the same thing; for certain it is he has bad habits, whether you know it or not; and such as my son Hugh *dares* not have. Hugh *dares* not err; because, if he did, he knows I would give him a hearty beating."

"At least," said Austin, "if he did err, he would, with such a punishment hanging in terror over him, take special care to conceal his faults from you, and I consider such brutal severity as a certain way of teaching a child habits of lying and dissimulation."

"Nonsense! for my child *dares* not lie, *dares* not conceal any thing from me; because he knows if he did that I should not scruple to flay him alive!"

"It is necessary then for your poor child to be born *perfect*, and to have none of the frailties of his fellow-creatures, since if he errs, and owns it, you would beat him severely; and if he lies to conceal his crime, you would flay him alive?"

"No, that is not a fair statement; but waving that point, let me ask you, on what principle you indulge Edwin?"

"I deny that I do so; and whenever my son does wrong, I tell him of his fault, and try to reason him out of it, and if he commits it a second time I punish him. If it be a serious fault, and one mischievous in its tendency, I punish it severely the *first* time to prevent a repetition of it."

"What, by a good horsewhip?"

"Oh no; by withholding from him a promised pleasure, while exciting him to good actions by the prospect of reward; for corporal punishment can only be necessary where a child has contracted such deeply rooted habits of wickedness as to have become little better than a brute."

"Well—I believe more in the efficacy of a positive beating, than in the infliction of any privation whatever; but we shall see, as our sons grow up, which mode of education was best. And we at least agree, that in persons in our line of life, it is more necessary that an early foundation of truth and honesty should be laid than in any other."

"Yes," replied Austin, "for I look on our class in society, as it is the most numerous next to the lowest order of all, to be, as it were, the chief depository of a country's virtue and a country's happiness, as our morality has not those artificial fences which guard the higher orders. The gentleman, beginning from the class immediately above us till one comes to the highest of all ranks, a rank above restraint because above responsibility, is

restrained from lying, fraud, and so forth, by a sort of facitious honor, if he has not the real one. He is always acting a part, and must abstain at least from ungentlemanly vices, though he may not have good principles. Therefore, though he may game, intrigue, and run in debt, he is not exposed to those temptations which in a humbler walk of life lead to lying, to dishonest practices in trade, to swindling, to the road, and to the gal-lows."

"Aye, there we agree; and therefore while you indulge your boy, though convinced of the necessity of giving him such principles as would, if general, make the *many* in a nation oppose a successful barrier to the vices of the *few*, I give mine these necessary good habits, by that most powerful of all agents, terror; but whether you are in fault or not, I can't say; only certain it is that Edwin, as I said before, is a naughty boy, and his mother winks at his faults, if *you* do not."

"This is a serious charge against my wife," said Austin, "and I believe a false one; but you have put me on my guard, and I will be very watchful in future." So saying, he wished Brograve good night, and returned full of thought to his home.

That Austin generally practised what he preached was very true; but though he suspected it not, his wife, a foolish, fond mother, counteracted his rational views of education; and as the mother sees so much more of a child than the father does, it is in a mother's power alone, perhaps, to give bad habits or to form good ones. But Austin was not yet conscious of his wife's weakness, nor its effects, as appearances were at present completely in Edwin's favor.

Brograve was, however, a greater dupe than Austin; his severity had had the usual effect of severity—it had taught dissimulation—and while his son was all trembling submission and virtuous propriety in his presence, out of it he most thoroughly deserved the appellation bestowed on him of "little black-guard;" but every one being aware of Brograve's temper, the poor boy was so gen-

erally commiserated, that no one would inform against him, lest the punishment inflicted on him by his father should far surpass the offence. But this was an unnecessary forbearance; for so obstinate was Brograve, and so bigotted to his own plan of education, that nothing but the evidence of his own eyes and ears could have convinced him that his son dared to err.

Austin, however, was doomed to have his eyes opened to some of the evil tendencies of Edwin, a very short time after the conversation took place which I have related above.

“Well—how do you do?” said Brograve one evening to Austin and his wife, while they were drinking tea.

“Pray walk in,” said Mrs Austin kindly, “and perhaps you will take a cup of tea with us.”

“Well, I don’t care if I do,” said Brograve, while Austin, more discerning than his wife, did not bid him welcome, though he offered him a chair; for he read on his countenance an expression of malignant pleasure, only too common to it, and he was sure that he came to see them from no benevolent motives;—nor was it long before he discovered that his suspicions were just; for, unsoftened by the truly kind feeling which led Mrs Austin to make fresh tea, and that of the best sort, while she cut up a new loaf, and took out of her closet some wedding cake which had been sent her, the coarse minded Brograve began thus;—

“So Austin! I don’t see Edwin with you, where is he this evening?”

“I conclude he stayed after school, as he often does, to play with his school fellows.”

“Very likely when he comes home he will tell you so.”

“Tell me so! and if he does I shall believe him; for my child does not lie Mr Brograve.”

“Don’t be too sure of that,” replied Brograve; “for the reason Edwin is not home is that his master first flogged him severely for telling a base falsehood, and has since shut him up till he has gotten a certain number of English verses by heart.”



"I can't believe it, I will not believe it," cried the distressed father; while Mrs Austin, though she looked angry, did not look *incredulous*, and indignantly told the officious Brograve that it was no business of his, and it was very wrong in him to come and try to set parents against their children.

"But I see by your look you believe me, though your husband does not; for you know Edwin better than *he* does."

"Is that true, wife?" said Austin, turning round with a stern look.

"Well, if ever I saw *so* mischievous a man!" cried Mrs Austin, evading the question.

"Now you want to make my husband distrustful of me."

"I wish I *could*," replied Brograve, "for it might be of service; for every body says that you spoil Edwin, and that you wink at his faults, and hide them from his father,—who would correct him out of them perhaps,—still who knows but that the boy will be hanged in time!"

At this brutal speech, Mrs Austin burst into tears.

"This is too much to bear," cried Austin; "do you come hither merely to insult my wife and slander my son?"

"You insulted me first, remember, by doubting I did not tell you truth of your son; but it *is true*, for I had it from one of the *ushers* himself, and also from one of the boys."

"They ought both to be whipped," sobbed out Mrs Austin, "for telling tales out of school."

"So *I* think," said Austin; "but if Edwin did lie, and I fear he really did, much as I disapprove of corporal punishments, I wish the master had flogged him twice instead of once, and I hope he will keep him the whole evening at his lessons."

"Well, well—I have told you what a sad boy young hopeful is, because I thought it my duty, that you *might* punish him; for mothers, I know, are apt to be silly, and

chicken hearted;—but I see you take it ill, and look askance at me, and so good night! I can only say I have brought up *my* son very differently, and you'll see how *he* will turn out."

"I would not question or reprove you before that man," said Austin when Brograve was gone; "but *now*, I command you to tell me whether his charge against you was true or false.—Does Edwin tell lies? and are you so wickedly and mischievously weak as to hide his faults from me, lest I should punish him?"

"I am sure I meant no harm," replied Mrs Austin, weeping, and frightened at seeing a frown on the usually placid, benevolent brow of her husband.—"To be sure, Edwin, like other children, will be naughty sometimes, and as I have taken him to task myself, I thought there was no need to vex you by letting you know it."

"But does he ever lie?"

"Now and then." On which the poor father rose and walked up and down his little parlor in great agitation.

"Listen to me," said he, "and mark well my words;—you have violated your duty both as a wife and a mother; as a wife, by having concealments from me; and as a mother, by not enabling me to bestow on our child that serious advice and wholesome chastisement which are necessary to form good habits, and prevent bad ones.—Woman! remember the fable of the thief and his mother."

"I am sure I wish that nasty, spiteful, mischief making fellow had never come hither," said Mrs Austin, still sobbing. "You never spoke so crossly to me before, and it is all along of him."

"Wife," said Austin, "though I know his motives were bad, not good, yet I thank him, because I hope to benefit by what he told me,—as it is wise to take advice even from an enemy."

"I think you and he too make a great fuss about nothing, husband. If Edwin was a big boy indeed, his telling a lie would be a shocking thing; but for a little

boy, not quite six years old ! who hardly knows right from wrong !”

“Don’t believe that ; a child of *four* years old knows right from wrong as well as a person of forty, and the boy who lies at four years old *will* lie when he is a big boy, and it is to *prevent* this, one ought to reason or punish him out of this fault when a child. I have heard it said, that when a boy becomes old enough to reason, he will reason himself out of this error of his childhood ; but, in the first place, this is assuming an untenable position,—namely, that all persons are conscious of their own defects ; secondly, as a love of trouble and effort is by no means natural to us, I am inclined to believe that we had all of us rather yield to an habitual fault than strive to correct it ; and that those children are the most indebted to their parents, who, thanks to their watchful care, have the fewest bad habits to correct. Look at this piece of iron, my dear, which I have bought for one of my experiments.”

“I do—and a fine piece it is.”

“Pshaw !” muttered Austin aside, “listen to me ; if I heat this by fire, and endeavor while the heat has rendered it pliable to bend it into a particular shape, I can do it with ease ; but if I wait, before I try to mould it, till it has become hard, I cannot bend or alter it.”

“But, my dear, why *should* you wait till it is hard ?” asked Mrs Austin with great simplicity.

“That is what I ask you,” replied Austin smiling, “why should you put off the time for amending your child’s faults, and giving him proper dispositions, till he is grown up, and his habits are become too rigid to be altered ? For *mind* is like *matter*, and must be worked upon before its bend is fixed. This *iron* I can heat and thereby render pliable again ; but no process that any one can apply to the human mind can operate in like manner on that, and there matter has the advantage over mind ; but mind and matter, philosophers think——”

“But my dear love, I am no philosopher,” said Mrs Austin gravely. And Austin replying “Very true, my

dear," with a look, I fear, of conscious superiority—dropped the conversation, till his wife renewed it thus:—

"But my dear Edwin will naturally learn to know better when he grows older."

Austin felt mortified on hearing this, feeling that he had the same ground to go over again.

"Naturally!" replied he; "what do you *mean* by nature, I wonder?"

"Mean! what should I mean? Nature is nature."

"Pshaw!" cried Austin again. "But habit is a second nature, wife; or perhaps what we call nature is after all nothing but habits imperceptibly formed; therefore, should ours, or any other child amend as he grows up, it certainly will not be naturally. No—the natural progress of habits, of falsehood for instance, in our line of life, is fraud and dishonesty, and concealed enormities of all kinds."

"But why in *our* line of life particularly?"

"Because the gentleman's son when he goes to college, or into the world, is kept from lying and fraud by the fear of shame—for he knows he would else run the risk of being told he was no gentleman, and must therefore either quit the society of gentlemen, or run the risk of having his brains blown out in a duel. But our son, should he be vicious, will, I am sorry to say, never be in a situation to be restrained by these salutary fears and dangers."

"Sorry to say! James! I am sure, I am heartily glad that he never will be. Brains blown out! Dear me, why the thought makes me all in a flutter."

"Then don't think of it; and to resume the subject more pleasantly—I dare say, my dear, you always mend in a stocking or shirt the smallest hole as soon as you see it."

"To be sure I do," replied Mrs Austin eagerly, for here she was quite at home,—“And why? because, as the old saw says, ‘One stitch in time saves nine.’”

"Excellent!" said Austin, smiling, "Now apply that wise saying to education, and the business is *done*. Cor-

rect the faults, the first faults of the *child*, and the man having few efforts to make will bless you while he lives. But come, give me a kiss ; I am sorry I distressed you by any thing I have said. Believe me, however, it is for your good, and that of our darling ; for he is our darling, and our *only* one, my dear Sarah ; and if he does not turn out well, remember we have no other child—But here he is.”

The boy entered the house with a confident air, though a conscious eye ; for he meant to tell some lie to account for his long stay at school, secure that his father would not suspect him, and that if his mother did she would not betray him.

“So, sir,” said his father, “why are you home so late?”

“O! Papa, only because——” Here his mother, assured that he was going to invent an excuse, interrupted him with, “Naughty boy, we know all, so you need not tell us ; for Mr Brograve says——”

“Be silent!” angrily interrupted her husband in *his* turn, “You know you stopped the meditated lie on *his* lips. Come with me into your chamber, sir—for I choose to speak to you alone, and I have much to say!” So saying he led the frightened but still pert child away, and the mother dared not follow. In a few minutes she heard the child crying very violently, and ran up stairs.

“He provoked me to knock him down,” cried Austin, pale with emotion ; “for though put on his guard by *you*, I have only *now* been able to extort a full confession from him. Oh! that fable how it haunts me! I protest I shall expect soon, you little wretch, to hear of your having stolen a horn book!”

“A horn book!” cried the boy pertly. “No, indeed ; if I steal, it shall be something handsomer!”

“If you steal!” cried Austin, shocked at this unpromising speech.

“I told you, my dear,” said his mother, “that he was too young to know right from wrong.”

“Peace woman! He knows very well that if you bid

him not to touch your cake, or your sugar, while you are gone, and he does so, he commits a *theft*; and if he were to make a practice of such things, and you, instead of punishing him were only to say, 'You are a naughty boy,' I tell you that you would be breeding up your child for the gallows. To crime, alas! I fear he is already in a degree callous; for he was not shocked at my fearing he should steal, but at my thinking him likely to steal so mean a thing, I *suspect* therefore that he has already been given to petty thefts which you have been so wicked as to conceal from me." His conscious wife *could* not answer, for she knew what he said to be true, and so did the boy; but he only pouted and looked sulky.

"Now go to bed, sir," cried his father. "Your master has done his duty by you to-day, I will see how I can best do mine by you tomorrow."

"I won't go to bed without my supper, though," sobbed out Edwin; "that I won't."

"Say that word again, and you shall live on bread and water for a week," replied Austin; and the boy threw himself into such violent and frantic passion as alarmed his mother; but his father taking her by the arm, led her down stairs, and locked Edwin into his room alone. "O wife!" said he, with tears in his eyes, "this is the first wretched night I have known since I married you! My eyes are at last open, and God grant it may not be too late!"

More angry than alarmed, more fretted than convinced, Mrs Austin did nothing but cry the rest of the evening; and after her husband had seen Edwin undress himself, and get into bed, she had the weakness to steal up to his room, and sooth and caress him till he fell asleep; and though she dared not give him supper, she put a piece of the bride-cake I mentioned before in his mouth unknown to her husband. Still she meant well, and thought herself the best of mothers; the error was in her head, not her heart, and like all weak people she would not submit to be guided by any one. Therefore, though she adored her husband, she thought that since her feelings as a mo-

ther were natural feelings, they could not mislead her ; and consequently though she did not openly oppose her husband's will with respect to Edwin, she did it in secret, thus setting her child an *example* of *disingenuousness*.

The next morning Austin told Edwin that he had at length fixed on a proper mode of punishing him for his wicked falsehoods of the preceding day, and that he should not be allowed to go to the fair which was to take place the next week.

"But all the other boys are going, and I have had two half-crowns given me to spend," exclaimed the boy.

"I am glad of it ! for then you will be the more severely punished, and will be more likely never to commit such faults again." "O ! indeed, papa, I never will, only try me this once ! and I will, indeed I will, be a good boy in future !" But in vain he cried and prayed, and his mother also ; the justly alarmed father, too virtuously affectionate to yield a point on which he thought his son's future good depended, put considerable violence on his feelings, and remained firm. Day after day he was thus assailed, and still he kept his resolution. The rest of the boys had a holiday and went to the fair, but Edwin remained at home. His mother, however, unable to resist his tears and entreaties, let him, when his father supposed he was in bed and asleep, accompany the maid and her brother in a walk through the fair, and he returned laden with gingerbread and a wagon which he had bought with his half-crowns.

"Foolish child !" said the mother, when she saw the wagon, "what have you done ? The wagon will make your father suspect that you have been to the fair."

"Oh, no ! ma'am," cried Betty, "I can tell master that I bought it as a present for master Edwin ;" and the weak mother saying "Very true Betty, so you can," the poor child received *another* lesson in that science of dissimulation in which he was already too great an adept.

Mrs Austin had been her husband's first love, and he had been hers ; but as she had an independent fortune of a few hundred pounds, and Austin had nothing, her pa-

rents forbade her to marry him ; and she obeyed ; though with much sorrow and reluctance. While her lover, mortified at her practising so well the virtue of obedience, and thinking that, if she had loved him as well as he loved her, she would by resisting have carried her point at last, left the town where she lived, and went to another part of the kingdom. There, full of pique against the, in his opinion cold hearted Sarah, he embraced an opportunity of marrying advantageously, and obtained a wife and a lucrative trade at the same time. But Austin loved as men love ; the forsaken Sarah loved as women love ; and when told that Austin was married, she formed in her heart a solemn resolution, for his sake, never to marry ; and though often urged by her parents to accept some one of the respectable offers which were made her, she firmly, though gently, resisted their solicitations ; and once she added, " I gave up the man I loved out of duty to you ; therefore I hope you will allow that I have a right to remain single to please myself."

Accounts of Austin and his wife often reached the town where Sarah lived, and she was congratulated sometimes on not having married him, because he was reported to be a dissipated husband.

" Remember," she used to reply, " that he was disappointed of his first love—he would, I dare say, have been a good husband to me ; and who knows," she used to add, " that this report is not false, and that he is not a good husband to the wife he has married ?"

After Austin had been married about ten years his wife died, leaving no children, and his first inquiry was whether Sarah was still single. He heard in reply that she was so, and that her parents were both dead ; and in a few weeks afterwards he returned to his native place on a visit. Sarah meanwhile heard with no small perturbation that he was expected, for now there were no obstacles to their marrying, should Austin's love for her revive ; but then that might not be. " When we parted," said she to herself, " I was only three and twenty, and there is a great difference between a wo-



man of twenty-three and one of thirty-three; besides, I have fretted in secret, and have lost that bloom which once distinguished me! Yet surely," thought Sarah, and she sighed as she thought it, "if Austin knew that I had lost my color on his account, though he did not think me so pretty, he would love me the more!"

Austin meanwhile arrived sooner than was expected, and the first walk he took was past the house where Sarah lived. He looked into the little window of her parlor as well as he could while walking by; but she was not there;—however, he distinguished, and recognised with some emotion, a little drawing which he had made, a bad copy from a bad print, and which was one of his first gifts to Sarah, for *she* thought it pretty, beholding it not with the eye of taste, but *love*; and framed and glazed it still made one of the ornaments of her sitting-room. This little circumstance, together with the information that though she had had several good offers she had refused them all, and declared her resolution never to marry, gave him great encouragement.

"How does she look?" said he to a mutual friend.

"Oh, very ill—so thin and pale, to what she was when you knew her! Indeed she is very much altered."

"I am altered too in ten years," replied Austin.

"But she looks as if she had known *care*."

"And so have *I* known care, and plenty of it too!" cried Austin sighing; "but it is over now—and who knows but Sarah and I may be happy together yet!"

Soon after his friend, at his desire asked Sarah to allow him as an old acquaintance to call on her; and she agreed to receive him the next morning. When the time appointed for the interview drew nigh, Austin's own ten years added to his age disturbed him as much as Sarah's did her. "For if," said he to himself, "she did not love me dearly enough when I was young and good-looking, she will not be likely to love me now I am not young, and am altered for the worse;" and by this time he was at Sarah's door. He was shown into her little parlor, which the closing of another door opposite con-

vinced him she had that instant quitted; and this he thought a good omen, as *flutter* perhaps had occasioned her retreat. He also saw that his *drawing* had been removed, and that he deemed a better omen still. At length, after many fruitless efforts, Sarah summoned resolution enough to open the door, the handle of which had for half a minute trembled in her hand.

"How do you do, Mr Austin?" said she, putting out her hand, and half drawing it back again.

"How are you, Miss Mallows?" replied he, taking her cold hand and letting it fall again—then seating himself without being asked, while Sarah sat down also.

Never was there a more cold uninteresting conversation—for both were too conscious to revert to past times; and though Austin *looked* a great deal of love, and emotion had made Sarah *seem* as blooming and beautiful as ever, he could not, dared not, *utter* any, as his wife was so recently dead;—while Sarah, being aware of what Austin's looks expressed, was more intent on finding something to fix her eyes upon, than in imagining pleasant topics for conversation. At length Austin, though reluctantly, rose to depart,—“I hope I shall see you again before you go, Mr Austin,” said Sarah.

“No—I fear not—I must return again to business to-morrow—I only came just to see old friends,—but I shall come again soon and stay longer.” Then venturing to press the hand timidly held out to him, he retired a happier man than he came.

“How could you tell me she was altered?” said he to his friend.

“Why so she is,—and looks like a ghost!”

“Like a ghost! She has as fine a bloom as ever.”

“Bloom!—If so, then it must be a hectic color, and the poor thing is in a consumption.”

“God forbid!” cried Austin, turning pale, “and to be sure she is very thin!” while all his spirits vanished immediately.

Sarah meanwhile had no drawback to the pleasure she felt on seeing Austin again, especially as she was sure he

was still fond of her, though he had been so faithless as to marry another woman. To be brief; when Austin came again, he opened his whole heart to Sarah, and was allowed to read the pure, unsullied page of woman's faith in *hers*.—They married, and were happy; and in four years she gave birth, after many disappointments, to a living child. Never was offspring more fondly welcomed, and never were the feelings of parental pride in that early stage of a child's existence more completely gratified; for Edwin's beauty was the admiration of every one, and he was pronounced to be one of the largest infants ever seen. There is something so attractive in beauty from its earliest dawn to its meridian, that one cannot wonder that the parents of a beautiful child are tempted to spoil it by too great indulgence;—but reason, if they be reasoning beings, must convince them that unwise indulgence defeats its own aim, if that aim be the happiness of the offspring so spoiled,—as experience and observation afford daily proofs that the happiest children are those who are the best governed. The sickly, because palled appetite, or the ravenous, because overloaded stomach, the diseased listlessness, and the fretful temper which attend on pampered and ill-managed children, are unknown to the child of regular and plain diet and of well-governed temper;—cheerfulness and uninterrupted good-humor beam upon their smooth brow, and dimple their health-mottled cheek; and when they grow up to man's or woman's estate, who shall pretend to say that those habituated in childhood to curb and deny their *little* appetites and passions, will not be best able to struggle with and to surmount the passions and appetites of their *riper* years; Austin was convinced of this, for he had thought, as well as felt, and was prepared to act on his convictions; but his wife *felt* only; or, if she pretended to reason it was on wrong grounds; for her argument, as she called it, was—“Poor things! when they grow up and go into the world they will meet with contradictions and hardships enough, therefore 'tis pity to contradict and thwart them when young;”

forgetting that those most used to have their wishes gratified must suffer the most keenly the disappointments which await them ; and that spoiling a child on this principle of mistaken kindness, is turning him out naked and unarmed against a host of armed and formidable assailants. However, Mrs Austin could not be convinced she was wrong, therefore her husband's superior wisdom did not counteract the effect of her folly.—Not that Austin himself was capable of practising all that he preached ; far from it ; for Temper, that universal agent in all human actions, from the hour of our birth to the last minutes of our existence, however unseen, and however disguised, was in him, unhappily, too often at work ; Temper excited naturally enough into a pernicious influence on the future character of Edwin, by the officious and frequently malignant interference of Brograve. Parents rarely, if ever, forgive any interference with the management of their children ; and the Austins had every parental feeling, good or bad, in its full force. Therefore when Brograve came, as he frequently did, with some tale of poor Edwin's naughtiness at school, and advised some of that wholesome correction which he had always bestowed upon his own son, Temper almost invariably forbade Austin to do what his neighbor advised—because he knew that punishing Edwin would give him pleasure ;—therefore, whenever the boy returned in disgrace from school, his little heart rejoiced as soon as he saw Brograve, because he had already shrewdness enough to see that Brograve's being his enemy made his father his friend ; and many a time had Edwin been suffered to eat himself into indigestion and a headach, because Brograve wondered how the Austins could cram their child so foolishly,—holding up the temperance to which he forced his son as a laudable example.

“I almost hate that man !” poor Mrs Austin used to say. “When I had no children he was so brutal as to reproach me with being childless ; and now that I have a child, and as lovely, promising a boy as the sun ever shone upon, he reproaches me with not knowing how to

manage him ! ” while the reproach sank the deeper because she felt that it was not altogether undeserved.

Brograve was, it is true, a man of brutal manners, the result of a bad temper ; and to say galling, teasing, mortifying things was one of the greatest delights of his life— for it is a great mistake to suppose that where Temper once gains considerable sway, it ever rests till it has corrupted the heart and deeply stained the disposition with malignity.—Alas ! who that has ever associated with the ready slaves of Temper, but has writhed beneath the scorpion whip of their sarcasm, and received in their self-love a deep indented wound, to rankle there until the last expiring throb of life ! It may be asked, why the Austins admitted the visits of Brograve. One reason was, that he had some dealings in business with Austin ; another, that he was of the same politics, and was, indeed, his friend as much as his disposition would let him be the friend of any one. Besides, Brograve had lost his wife, and his only child was at this period gone to a boarding school ; therefore he was, generally speaking, a solitary man, and the kind benevolent feelings of the Austins led them to tolerate the visits which they could not relish.

With all Brograve’s alertness to gain a knowledge of Edwin’s misdeeds, some, I may say *unhappily*, escaped his vigilance ; for though Austin often, through spite, allowed what he too negligently thought venial faults to go unpunished, he never failed to chastise any thing approaching crime ; and had not the child early learnt to be so great a liar himself, that he did not believe in the truth of others, it is probable that he might have been cured of the vice of lying as soon as it became known to his father ; because Austin held out to his son complete impunity for any fault he might commit, provided he honestly and openly confessed it, and did not by falsehood endeavor to evade detection. But Edwin, not trusting to his father’s word, because he knew that no reliance was to be placed on his own, continued, with the cruelly kind privity of his mother, to lie, and lie undetected.

One day as Edwin was walking in their little garden, Mrs Austin saw something shining in his hand, which he was surveying with evident pleasure; and coming upon him unawares, she saw it was a netted purse with steel tassels. "Where did you get that purse?" said his mother pale with alarm.

"I found it," replied the boy.

"Found it! are you sure you found it—and where?"

"Why, I tell you I did find it," cried Edwin surlily, "and that's enough."

"No, it is *not*, sir,—I must know *where* you found it."

"I shall not tell you."

"Very well, sir; then your father shall make you."

"Do you threaten me?" exclaimed the young tyrant; "take that then," and he gave her with his fist a blow on the face, which made the blood gush from her nostrils over her handkerchief and gown.

"And your father shall see me thus too," faltered out Mrs Austin, her heart suffering more than her face from the cruelty and ingratitude of the child she adored. But Edwin, who really loved his mother, though he was too clever not to see her weakness, and to despise her in consequence of it, fell at her feet, wrapped his arms round her, and with frantic exclamations of regret, with trickling tears and vehement kisses, conjured her "to believe in his penitence, to forgive his fault, and to conceal it from his father!" to which in the weakness of her heart she acceded. Thus a fault so serious, so big with future mischief, as a blow given in passion and revenge by a child to an affectionate mother, remained unpunished by that mother, and its pernicious influence uncounteracted by the warning voice and salutary severity of paternal admonition.

But she had sense enough to add, "I will tell your father, notwithstanding, if you don't confess where you got that purse."

"I found it in a path leading from our playground hither," said Edwin,

"And did you not inquire, whether no one had dropped it?"

"That was no business of mine," replied he again sulkily.

"There you are mistaken," returned Mrs Austin; "in common honesty you were bound to produce what you had found, and try to find an owner for it." (During this time Mrs Austin's face continued to bleed, but she was too much interested in what she was saying to attend to it.)

"It is all nonsense," exclaimed Edwin, "I found it, and so it is mine now."

"So far from it, that I *insist* on your carrying it back to school, and proclaiming that you have it."

"I won't."

"Then, sir, your father must make you," coolly answered his, for once, firm mother. And the boy, seeing she was in earnest, was beginning to coax her with, "But, my dear mother, my pretty mamma!" and "Only hear me first, my darling mother," when at this moment one of the ushers knocked at the door; and having been told by Austin, whom he met in the street, that his wife and son were in the garden, he came to them unannounced.

"My business, Edwin, is with you," said he with seeming carelessness. "I dropped my purse yesterday somewhere in the path leading from the play-ground hither; for I remember taking it out there, and not putting it up again; and as your way home lies through that path, I thought, perhaps, you might have found it!"

"Is it a blue purse with shining tassels, sir?" cried the boy blushing, while his mother was too much fluttered to speak.

"Yes, it was."

"Oh dear! then I am so glad!" exclaimed the artful child; "for I did find it, and was now this moment, as my mother will tell you, coming to proclaim what I had found to the whole school, in order to find an owner!"

“I wonder you did not do so when you first found it,” replied the usher with a look of suspicion; “but where is it? there were only ten shillings in silver and a seven-shilling-piece in it;” and taking it from the conscious boy, he told the money, but found only nine shillings.

“Oh dear! I had forgot,” cried Edwin; “I took a shilling out, and here it is!” while the usher after a struggle with himself, said, as the poor mother was present, “Well, you may keep that;” but he spoke it with a look that seemed to say, “It is more, however, than you deserve.” Then turning to Mrs Austin, he started on observing her bloody appearance, and asked whence it came.

Ashamed to speak the truth, and afraid at the same time (for she knew that as a conscientious man the usher must punish her son in some way or other,) she weakly evaded the question, by saying, she had had a blow on her nose—then, glad to be alone, she made the necessity of applying a styptic, and changing her dress, an excuse for bidding him good morning. What the usher said to Edwin when she was gone, nobody knows; for Edwin would not tell, and the usher, contented with having done his duty, was too generous to tell himself. But reproof from him was the only punishment inflicted on Edwin, for an action which was certainly the next thing to a theft;—and when the poor deceived Austin bade God bless his child that night by the title of good boy, his disingenuous and culpable wife forbore to tell him that his *good* boy had struck her a blow from the impulse of revenge, and had exhibited proofs of dishonesty, by an act which, if not corrected in time, might lead to terrible mischiefs!—

But alas! Mrs. Austin was too weak, and too wilfully blind to the probable consequences of her criminal concealment, to give her husband this proper and necessary information; nor had she even the *slender* merit of showing her offending son, by her manner towards him, that she had a deep sense of his misconduct, and resented it as it



deserved ; on the contrary, she behaved to him as if he had not erred ; and how completely confounded must be that child's conceptions of right and of wrong, whose parent neither punishes severely such flagrant derelictions of duty, nor expresses by word, by look, or action, the horror of forboding anguish which they ought to call forth in the bosom of thinking and well principled parents !— And in a few days this thoughtless mother even forgot the circumstance entirely ; for Edwin obtained a prize at school for his quickness in learning, and he came home one evening with a *black eye*, the cause of which gratified both her vanity and her tenderness.

“ Well, good folks ! ” said Brograve, that evening, “ how do you do ? ” then rubbing his hands he added, “ There is Edwin coming home with such a black eye ! I wonder what scrape young graceless has got into *now* ! ”

“ A black eye ! dear me ! I hope — ” cried his mother anxiously.

“ Oh ! aye—I suppose, ” interrupted Brograve, “ you hope it has not spoiled his beauty ! but it would be so much the better for him perhaps if it had,—for with that handsome face of his he stands a chance of being spoiled by the women as well as by papa and mamma. But here he comes ! look at mamma's darling—pray do ! ” Edwin did indeed enter with an eye dreadfully disfigured, though not injured ; but his mother, who knew thoroughly the expression of his countenance, read nothing of the perturbation of guilt on it, therefore foresaw no punishment for him, and no triumph for Brograve.

“ Thou unlucky boy ! what hast thou been doing now ? ” exclaimed his father.

“ Aye—no good—I'll be bound for it, ” cried Brograve.

“ I have been fighting, ” replied the boy firmly, darting a fierce look at Brograve, and with a boy bigger than myself.”

“ There's no great harm in that, ” said his father.

“ No, if this be really the case, ” observed Brograve.

“ The whole school saw it, ” proudly answered Edwin — “ there goes one of the ushers, ask him if you like.”

Brograve immediately ran after him, and with a mortified look returned preceding the usher.

"I give you joy, madam," said the good natured usher, "of your young and zealous champion; though really in such a cause I would almost have risked a black eye myself."

"Was it on account of his mother that he fought?" asked his father with quickness.

"Yes," replied Edwin, bursting into tears; "yes,—that great brute Soames called my mother an ugly old woman, and a bad mother; and so I struck him, and so we went to blows, till I could see no longer!"

"Bravo! there was a good boy!" cried Brograve trying to hide his mortification under a laugh; while the delighted mother hugged her child to her bosom, kissed his tears away, and carefully examined the effects of the blow, the precious pledge of her son's zealous love.

"Give us your hand, my man," said his father, with the tone of deeply awakened sensibility; "you shall not repent, I promise you, that you raised your arm in defence of your mother!"

This exploit, which certainly was a proof of good feeling and of courage, raised Edwin high in the estimation of his father, and if possible endeared him still more to his mother, nor did it fail to exalt his character in the eyes of his school fellows; and at fifteen, when his father began to think it time to bind him out apprentice, the beauty of his face and person, the plausibility of his manners, and the quickness of his talents, caused him to be spoken of as a lad of much promise by all but Brograve, who felt a father's jealousy, and used to observe when Edwin was praised in his hearing, "Aye—aye—it is all very well; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and all's not gold that glitters; and we shall see whether he'll turn out as well as my Hugh has done, and get as forward in life."

About this time Mrs Austin was seized with a dangerous illness, and Edwin's attention to his sick mother was the admiration of every one. On her recovery, therefore, she was congratulated by all her friends on the un-

wearied attention and affection which her son had shown her.

“Aye,” replied the gratified mother, “I always knew he loved me ;—but he would not have been so fond of me, you know, if I had not been kind to him, and spoiled him as some people think ;—your severe mothers who correct their children are never loved by them !”

Poor woman ! she did not consider that love unaccompanied by respect is not much worth having from any one.

Nor indeed was her assertion true ;—for it is the observation of every unprejudiced person, that those parents are treated by their children through life with the most regular affection and respect, whose conduct towards their offspring, through every stage of their existence, has been marked by undeviating principle and ever watchful care,—by salutary severity tempered by parental indulgence,—and who laid down for their education rules of right acting, which they enforced by *habitual firmness* ; rules that like the steady flame which guided the children of Israel at night from the land of Egypt, led them safely through the dangers of childhood, and quitted them not till every peril was past.

At length the hour arrived when, however reluctantly, the Austins must part with their son, in order that he might be taught a business and gain his own livelihood. When Austin married his second wife, he gave up, to oblige her, his business in the city of —, and retired to his native place, where he opened a small shop, only just large enough to employ part of his money, and to give him something to do ; resolving that Edwin, if after a year’s trial he should like the business which Austin had left, namely that of a chemist and druggist, should be articled as assistant to the person to whom he had resigned his shop, with a view to become a partner in it when he was out of his time ; and Austin and his wife intended going to reside at —, to be near their son as soon as he was in business for himself.

Austin was a man fond of reading, and he had also a

little smattering of science. The former he indulged when he lived at —, by subscribing to, and frequenting a public library; and the latter by chemical experiments, which, if they did not improve the knowledge of others, at least served to amuse himself; and he hoped that Edwin would have the same taste, for he knew that such a taste would serve to endear his business to him.

It was a sad day for the poor mother when she bade Edwin adieu! but she tried to console herself by the thought that it was for his good, and also by the promise that he would always visit them for a few days at Christmas; and at Midsummer her husband assured her he would drive her over to see him. Austin accompanied his son to the place of his destination, and when he took leave of him he could only comfort himself by the idea that he was returning to a wife whom he doted on, and who would sooth his regrets by sharing in them to the utmost. Nor was Edwin without his feelings and his regrets,—and his weekly letters continued to express every sentiment which his indulgent parent desired. But when the year of trial was nearly at an end, and Christmas being almost arrived, Edwin was to return the visit which his parents had made him in the summer, they found his letters become less frequent and less long, and they began to fear that absence and distance had weakened his affection towards them. Still he wrote with much apparent delight of the prospect he had of seeing them soon, and of eating his Christmas dinner with them; and as parents are apt to flatter themselves, the good Austins attributed the brevity and rarity of their son's letters to press of business, a business which he assured them he liked better and better every day. His mother meanwhile had been busily and happily employed in preparing for Christmas;—for, was she not preparing to welcome her heart's treasure and her affection's pride?—and the mince meat was made, the turkey bought, and the raisins stoned, ready for the Christmas dinner, with a joy and an alacrity which none but those preparing to feast a long absent object of devoted love can know or understand.

A few, a very few of the friends whom Edwin loved best were invited to meet him; and before the time of his expected arrival drew nigh, his anxious father went to the coach office, to be in readiness to receive him. The mother, meanwhile, was busy in making cakes and jellies to please the luxurious palate of Edwin, or she would have been at the office too;—but she broke off from her employment to listen to every noise, thinking he was come, and several times she ran to the window fancying she saw him through the blinds.—What then must have been her sorrow and disappointment when her husband returned saying, both the mails had been through, and Edwin was in neither of them! It was with difficulty the disappointed mother could prevail on herself to finish the no longer pleasant tasks she had begun,—and though she welcomed her guests with her lips and words, her heart and her thoughts were with her absent child.—Nor could Austin himself recover his disappointment;—though his native politeness and hospitality made him do the honors of a very excellent table in his usual friendly manner, and he forced himself to eat in order to induce others to do the same;—but his poor wife could not carry her self-control so far; and though she was very ready in helping her friends, she could not swallow any thing herself; nor could she join the jest, or listen to the carol; for the mother's darling was absent, and the mother's heart was joyless.

At last came the postman, and instead of Edwin they received a letter from him, telling them that he was preparing to set off,—when he was seized with a violent cold, which forced him to stay where he was; but he hoped that a night or two's rest would restore him; and he desired them not to write, for before he could receive their letter he should probably be on his road home.

“I thought,” said Austin, “there must be some very strong and essential reason for the boy's disappointing his mother and me. But, what's the matter, wife? Come, foolish woman! drink a glass of wine to Edwin's recovery, and don't cry! He will be here soon! A cold is not a fever!”

“But it may end in one!” she replied. And though pleased that Edwin had so good an excuse for not coming, her anxious maternal heart was pained because that excuse was illness.

That night they went to bed, happy in the bliss of ignorance! The next day neither Edwin nor a letter came. The third day brought them a letter, but not from their son. It came from his master, and contained overwhelming intelligence indeed!—

It so happened that the wife of the chemist with whom he was living had a sister married to an opulent tradesman in London, and like other fashionable people she thought she had better pass the Christmas vacation out of London; therefore she invited herself to pay a visit to her sister. This woman was young, exquisitely beautiful, excessively extravagant and equally depraved; and her husband, who was not young, and very ugly, was jealous of her with great reason. Unfortunately for Edwin, his excessive beauty of face and person immediately called forth her attention and riveted her admiration;—and a poor youth, only just seventeen, not accustomed to the slightest self-denial, but “curst with every granted prayer,” was not likely to oppose a barrier of principle and duty to the dangerous advances of so captivating a being.

Two days before Christmas day this well-practised seducer pretended to receive a summons from London to a sick friend, and set off by herself in a post-chaise; but she went no further than the first stage, where Edwin joined her, having taken leave of his master, in order, as he said, to proceed to——taking care before he set off to put his lying letter of excuses in the post-office. While, therefore, his anxious parents supposed him detained from their longing sight by unexpected and unwelcome illness, he was in reality at an inn on the road living in adultery with a profligate woman, who passed him off for her husband's son by a first wife!—But detection soon followed the crime; a person who knew both Edwin and the lady saw them at the inn window, and communicated

what he saw to Mr Maule,—who immediately mounted his horse and rode to the scene of iniquity. Regard for Mrs Verney's reputation as the sister of his wife, and his wife's tears and entreaties, prevented Mr Maule from betraying her infamy to her husband, and he contented himself with exacting from her a solemn promise to break off all connexion with Edwin. Then, having secured a place for her in the mail-coach, he insisted that she should return by it instantly to London and to her husband; allowing her to say in excuse for her sudden return, that he had quarrelled with her, and behaved so rudely that she could stay no longer at his house; and he did not leave her till he saw her drive off in the mail. How to dispose of Edwin was a more difficult matter; but he resolved to take him back with him, and write his father a full account of every thing. A disclosure he could not avoid; for his wife had solemnly protested she would not, could not live in the house with a young man who had seduced and probably brought infamy on her sister; he therefore wrote that letter to the parents which banished every feeling of comfort from their hearts.

When Austin could speak, and at first utterance was wholly denied him, he exclaimed, while his half-frantic wife was reading the letter in pale and tearless sorrow.—

“So, so, at seventeen he is already a complete liar and adulterer! O wife, I doubt you have to answer for the first! That letter, that accursed letter! a mark of still greater, because more deeply-rooted vice than that which it was meant to hide? No;” added he, walking down the room, “if he had not been a ready-made liar, he could not have been guilty of the second fault; for he would have said, I *cannot* go with you! because I cannot deceive my parents. I never lied to them *yet*, and I *dare* not, *will* not do so now. But a falsehood I now believe costs him nothing, and therefore he is prepared and ripe for every other vice! O wife! misled, unhappy woman! this comes of your concealing——” Here he stopped; for his poor wife, unable to bear her own misery and his reproaches, had fallen off her chair in a fit, and for

some hours even the consciousness of his son's guilt was lost in the dread of losing her.

When she was quite recovered, her affectionate husband begged her to forgive whatever he had uttered in the first transports of sorrow, that might have given her added pain ; and then he listened with patience and some pleasure to her rapid and copious abuse of the wicked hussy who had no doubt corrupted her innocent child ; till, glad to palliate his son's crime as much as possible, he allowed himself to be convinced that though Edwin was as much in fault in writing the letter as Mrs Verney, still there was no doubt the seduction was entirely on her side.

"But what shall we do with this offending child ?" said Austin. "You see this has changed all your plans for his future life. What can he do ? Whither can he go ?"

"Go !" exclaimed his mother, "Go ! why, this is *his* home, James Austin, and I trust it will now, and *ever* be open to him !"

"Well said, my love," replied the husband. "Whatever be the crimes of a child, a parent's heart should never be shut against him, and his arms should shelter him if possible from a frowning world ;—and shame and wo light on the heads of those parents who can in a criminal forget the babe whom they called into existence, and whom perhaps their want of care, and their neglect in his helpless infancy, exposed to acquire those tendencies to evil which ultimately led to ruin and to infamy ! My dearest love, how could you suppose that, when I said whither is Edwin to go ? I meant to forbid the poor child from coming home !"

His wife only answered by throwing her arms round his neck, and sobbing on his bosom ;—whence however she suddenly started, and exclaimed, "How that spiteful Brograve will triumph, and throw his formal ugly son's purity in our teeth ! Well, there is one advantage in being ugly, however, and young Brograve's beauty will never lead *him* into temptation !"

The next day Austin sent a letter of a few lines commanding his son home, and Edwin obeyed the summons ;



but no anxious father was now waiting to receive him at the inn, no mother's heart was throbbing with tumultuous joy at his expected approach; the prodigal son was indeed coming, but the fatted calf proclaimed not his welcome. Edwin did not want confidence; still he felt the moment an awful one, when he opened the well known door and stood a convicted culprit in the presence of his parents. Though tutored by her husband, and also taught by her own sense of propriety. Mrs Austin could scarcely forbear falling on Edwin's neck when she saw him, nor could she help whispering to herself, "He is so handsome, I don't wonder that wicked woman fell in love with him."

"Sit down, sir," said Austin with a faltering voice, while his mother involuntarily made way for him to come to the fire. "Alas!" thought Edwin, "here have I been for hours in a cold coach, and yet my mother does not offer to get me warm stockings, or warm beer, nor does she even seem to remember I *must* be cold! O dear, O dear! they must both be very angry!"

"So you are come at last, sir?" said Austin sternly. "Alas! unhappy boy! with what different feelings did we expect you last week! and what a different welcome would have been yours! Then, all that our little fortune could afford was done to show our joy at your return, and our hearts were joyful, for we expected a dutiful, an affectionate, and a guiltless child! But now, no feast, no welcome, no rejoicing hearts await you. You come to a silent and gloomy roof, which your guilt has rendered so, and to the wretched parents whose hearts you have nearly broken!"

"Sir, sir, for God's sake spare me, sir!" cried Edwin, falling on his knees, and trembling as much with agony as cold, "and O! in mercy, pity and forgive me!"

"Rise, boy, rise, no acting for me, I must see penitence before I pronounce pardon."

I shall leave my readers to imagine what virtuous parents so circumstanced would say to an erring but beloved child; suffice it that his mother was strenuous in laying great

blame on Mrs Verney, and his father was going to inculpate her also ; when Edwin started up and with manliness and spirit above his years said, "You are welcome to blame me as severely as you choose, for in so doing you only do justice,—but I cannot, *will* not suffer you to blame her in this manner, I will not submit to be justified at her expense ; for, however wrong she may have been, my guilt was at least equal to hers."

"There is heart, there is honor in that !" exclaimed Austin, and taking Edwin's hand he grasped it kindly in his.

"My dear husband !" cried Mrs Austin eagerly, starting from her seat, "may I not kiss him now ? Do let me ! you see he is good yet in some things !" And as Austin smiled through tears, she threw herself on Edwin's bosom, and they wept together. When once the restraint imposed on the affections is taken off, they rush like water through a floodgate, carrying down every thing before them on their passage. A few hours saw Edwin reinstated as a welcome guest, and a beloved child—and his fond mother was rubbing his cold feet with her own warm hands in order to restore their circulation. But travelling all night in a cold winter's frost, and in great agitation of mind, had had a pernicious effect on the health of the unfortunate Edwin, and before two days were at an end he was raving in the delirium of a fever.

How utterly forgotten in this moment of agonized anxiety were the faults of the unconscious sufferer, how bitterly repented of was the repining voice, that had uttered the ungrateful sentiment,

"Why was my prayer accepted ! why did Heaven  
In anger hear me when I ask'd a son !"

"Let him but live ! let him but be spared to us, O God of mercy ! and do with him whatsoever seemeth good in thy sight," now burst from the quivering lips of both parents ; and after a long struggle, the excellence of Edwin's constitution prevailed.

It was now necessary that Austin should settle on some

new plan for his son, as the first had been so unhappily defeated ; when, just as he was beginning to think on the subject, he received an offer of a situation in London for him, which nothing but a dread of exposing Edwin to a renewal of his acquaintance with Mrs Verney could have made him for a moment hesitate to accept. It was from a cousin of his wife, a chemist in a very large way of business, who, wishing in a few years to retire from the fatigue of the shop, and being disappointed of his expectations to resign in favor of his son, as the youth chose to go to sea rather than settle in trade, thought he could not do better than take Edwin into partnership ; and he made known his kind intentions, in a very friendly and satisfactory letter.

The utmost wishes of Austin for his son's success in life had never exceeded the prospect of a situation like this.—But if accepting it would expose the morals of Edwin to the danger he justly apprehended for him, every feeling of duty urged him to decline it. In this dilemma he wrote to Mr Maule, stating the proposal to him, and begging to know how far he thought he should, by acceding to it, run the risk of leading Edwin again into the situation from which he had been just extricated. The answer appeared to Austin a very satisfactory one—Mr Maule wrote word, that Mrs Verney having formed another connexion had left her husband, and would probably, in the career of profligacy which she was running, forget Edwin entirely, or at least cease to retain any partiality for him ;—and the heart of Austin being made easy by this information, he joyfully accepted the kind offer of his cousin Williams, and Edwin was told what mode of life awaited him.

When Edwin heard that he was to live in London, not only for a few years, but probably for life, his heart throbbed with tumultuous exultation—for Mrs Verney, had given him a most glowing picture of its delights, and he could not help hoping that she would introduce him into some of the attractive scenes which she had so forcibly described. But he took care not to testify all the joy

which he felt, and he dwelt chiefly on the pleasure he should derive from practising, on so large a scale, a business which, under every circumstance, had been one of great interest to him—while, to do him justice, he did not at all exaggerate the satisfaction which he expressed at the assurance his parents gave him, that as he was their only object in life, and his home would therefore be their home, it was their intention when he had become finally fixed in London to take a house near him.

At length the hour for his departure arrived, an hour which bitterly recalled that of their last parting, and was much more full of anxious alarms and fearful expectations than the former had been. He had since then been “tried in the balance, and found wanting.” Besides, as temptation had found and enslaved him in the narrow circle of a provincial town; how was he likely to escape its influence when it walked abroad on the wide theatre of a metropolis!

“You will come and see us once a year,” said his mother over and over again; “and my good man has promised to treat me now and then with a journey to London!” She added this in the fruitless hope of losing in the idea of the promised future the agony of the present moment. Austin more composed, though not less miserable, exacted from his son a solemn promise not to see Mrs Verney again, and he, *early used to habits of dissimulation and falsehood*, had no objection to give the assurance required, because he did not feel himself at all bound to abide by it.

To London he went; and at first the variety of objects which arrested and gratified his curiosity, besides the constant occupation which immediately devolved on him, drove from his mind every thought of Mrs Verney. But one day as he passed through Cheapside, where he knew that her husband lived, he saw the name over a linen draper’s shop; and observing a servant cleaning the step of the private door, he stopped and asked whether Mrs Verney was in London and how she did.

"Mrs Verney indeed!" replied the maid with a toss of her head—"There be none such as she here now."

"What! is she dead, or gone away?"

"Dead!—No such good luck for her husband, poor man! No—she is gone off with a fellow—a good for nothing hussy as she is—and those that like her may go after her." So saying she shut the door in his face, leaving Edwin quite as angry with Mrs Verney as she was; for when she had talked to him of eternal love and constancy, he, poor credulous youth! had believed her, and now in a few short weeks she had gone off with another lover!—"But I see she is not worth fretting about," said Edwin to himself, and he wisely resolved to forget her as soon as possible.

Some months after, as he was walking towards the Strand, he saw a carriage stop, and a lady in a veil give her footman a message; on which the footman came up and told him his lady wished to see him. Edwin obeyed the summons, and recognised in the veiled lady his beautiful though inconstant Mrs Verney, who was then in splendid keeping; but was not sorry, in case of a decline of her favor to have a resource in the devoted attachment of a youth whose want of knowledge of the world would make him an easy dupe.

From that day she regained her empire over the infatuated Edwin. All the money which he could spare was expended in presents for her, and all the time he could steal from business he appropriated to clandestine visits to her apartments. At the end of a year he went down to L—— on a visit to his parents; and the first two days their easily deceived hearts were satisfied, both with their son's expressions of unabated affection, and with the degree of pleasure he seemed to take in their society; while his mother's pride in him was greater than ever, from the excessive improvement in his person, as from the tall, awkward, though blooming boy, he was become the fine, well proportioned, and well dressed man.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs Austin the night of his arrival, when she retired to rest, "well—even Mr Bro-

*grave* must allow that our son Edwin Austin looks quite the gentleman."

"Too much so, *I* think wife," replied he sighing; "where did the boy get those trinkets that he wears? He ought not to buy them, and I should less like to hear that they were given to him."

These Mrs Austin thought unnecessary scruples, unnecessary disapprobation; and much better satisfied than her husband, she fell asleep thanking her God that her son, and *such* a son, was once more under his parental roof. But in a day or two more she participated in her husband's uneasiness; for Edwin was absent, restless and evidently tired of his visit; while, as the time drew near which was to restore him to the metropolis, his eyes brightened and his color became more vivid.

"I wonder whether he has ever seen that woman again!" said his father to himself; "but I dare not ask the question, I dare not expose him to the temptation of lying!" therefore Edwin departed uninterrogated.

"Well, is your fine gentleman gone?" said Brograve coming in abruptly.

"Our *son* is gone," mildly answered Austin.

"And your fine gentleman too, for I am sure he is fine enough with his broach, and his seals, and his ring on his little finger.—A journeyman's place is a good birth enough if he can afford such things. I am sure my poor son can't, though he has a much better situation."

"There—now the murder is out!" cried Mrs Austin. "It is all jealousy of our poor Edwin that makes you so spiteful against him?"

"Spiteful! *was* I spiteful? No, that I was not, for I did not mean to hurt you by telling you all I have heard; but now since you provoke me I will."

"Wife, you brought this upon yourself. But as I did not, and I wish not to be made uncomfortable, I beg, Mr Brograve, you will consider me, if you do not wish to spare her, and keep your bad news to yourself."

"That is very cowardly, my dear; let him say his worst, I defy him."

“Then I will speak,” replied Brograve greatly provoked; “and I tell you that it is said your son’s fine things were given him by a mistress, one Mrs Verney,—and I hear his cousin and he are not over fond of one another.”

“As I know the latter part of your story to be false, Mr Brograve,” replied Austin with suppressed emotion, “I choose to believe the whole to be so; and if you please, we will change the conversation.—Wife, have you nothing for our friend’s supper?” added he. And Mrs Austin, whom consternation at the name of Verney had kept in trembling silence, was very glad to stop Brograve’s mouth, even at the expense of the nicest things in her larder. But however well his presence of mind enabled him to carry off his alarming conversation before the coarse minded relater of it, it sunk deep into the heart of the apprehensive father, and Austin lay awake that night vainly revolving plans for his conduct in consequence of it. At length, knowing the nature of reports, especially in a country town, and aware that scarcely a human being is able to repeat any thing exactly as it is related, they quieted their minds by a resolution to disbelieve the present information relative to Mrs Verney, and to think it was only the former story, which having now for the first time reached the town of L—— was confounded with present and passing occurrence.

“And if all should not be as it ought to be,” said the good man, “we shall go to London in June, and then I shall be able to remedy matters.”

If Austin had wished (a revenge which his generous nature would have disdained) to tell Brograve in return tales of his son, he had not the opportunity. Of Hugh Brograve he scarcely knew any thing, as Brograve, afraid that Edwin would corrupt him, had forbidden him to associate with that spoiled child, as he called him, during the holidays; and as Hugh was at other times at a boarding school at some distance, the boys were nearly strangers to each other. Consequently Edwin could not delight his mother’s ears with detailed stories of young

ve's naughtiness; and though she *did* know the  
 tion by which he was distinguished, she was too  
 feeling, and too generous, to wound a parent's ear  
 th a communication.

[do not wish to leave my principal characters in  
 o dwell on any thing relative to the subordinate  
 shall content myself with giving one instance of  
 d results of Brograve's system, and of his obstinacy  
 owing that such results could not take place. When  
 Brograve was seventeen, and Edwin Austin fifteen  
 old, both the boys were invited to join a party  
 — to a fair some miles off, and Edwin's parents,  
 one to gratify their son, consented to his going;  
 rograve, as prone to thwart Hugh, at once peremp-  
 torbade him to go. Before the day arrived, how-  
 Austin learnt that the fair was likely to be a scene  
 and drunkenness; he therefore, though Edwin as  
 e seen before, was very fond of such places, insisted  
 staying at home, promising him some other frolic  
 , of a less pernicious nature; and Edwin, well  
 that his father would amply reward him for the  
 d privation, obeyed with a good grace.

so Hugh Brograve. Accustomed to enjoy clan-  
 ly what openly he dared not, he pretended to have  
 a pain of his face and head, putting something in  
 ek to swell it out as if inflated by pain, that his  
 himself advised him to apply a poultice, and go  
 as early as possible; and Hugh, locking himself  
 room, and desiring not to be disturbed on any ac-  
 got out of the back window as soon as he heard  
 er go out of the front door,—whence, having a  
 eady, he galloped off to the fair, where he spent  
 ht; and, having bribed the servant, was in bed  
 time enough to answer his father's inquiry of  
 Hugh! how is your face this morning?"

the "little blackguard" had been so very riotous,  
 very comical, that he had attracted a great deal  
 tion; and as he had when half drunk boasted of  
 k he had played his father, his exploit became



much talked of by those who knew, or who hated Brograve; and amongst the rest it reached the ears of the Austins. But pity for Hugh, and a feeling of generous pride, forbade them to copy the coarseness which they blamed, by naming the affair to the deceived father, when he a day or two after it had been told to them by Edwin paid them a visit.

Brograve had heard so much of the riotous and disgusting scenes which had taken place at the fair, that he came brimful of indignation against the magistrates for suffering such meetings—"My son," added he, "was asked to join a party thither; but I was too wise to let him go. I suppose *yours* went of course, as he loves a frolic, and you never deny him any thing!"

"My son was not there," replied Austin; "I disapproved his going, and he stayed willingly at home."

"Willingly!—that must have been acting—and I dare say he was there unknown to you."

"No, indeed," replied Mrs Austin, thrown off her guard by this provoking charge, "he was with us till midnight—and *our* son, I assure you, is not *given* to such hypocritical ways. We leave them to *your* son; he certainly *was* there, and could therefore inform you that Edwin was *not*."

Rage and astonishment deprived Brograve at first of the power of utterance; but recovering himself he exclaimed with an oath, "that it was an infernal falsehood, for that his son went to bed with a swelled face at six that evening." And Mrs Austin was going to relate how he made the swelling, and to give the particulars related by Hugh while drunk; when a look from her husband checked her, and she only said, "I have merely related what I heard."

"And from whom?"

"From Edwin."

"From Edwin!" he replied with a sneer; then snapping his fingers, "I don't care that for the information;" and seeing Hugh go past, "But there he goes," he exclaimed, "and he shall come and confront this accuser."

Accordingly he did call him in, and then desired Edwin to repeat his charge before his face. Edwin was, however, too kind to give a detail which he thought even Brograve could not believe wholly unfounded in truth; he therefore simply told Hugh, he had heard he had been at the fair unknown to his father, and that his mother had repeated what he said to Mr Brograve.

Hugh, knowing his father's implicit confidence in the efficacy of his plan of education, and that he would not believe him guilty on any evidence but that of his own senses, took courage, and with all the well feigned indignation of injured innocence inveighed against the cruelty of those who had thus aspersed him; adding to the severe physical pain he had experienced, the moral one of being accused of a degree of baseness and duplicity which his soul abhorred, and which the excellent education he had received made him incapable of.

"Well said, my grateful and good fellow," vociferated his father. "I knew it was all a lie—and I would forfeit my right hand for my son's rectitude of conduct at any time." While Austin equally deceived, for he could not believe a youth of seventeen could be so thorough a hypocrite, joined Brograve in inveighing against slanderers, and reproved Edwin for repeating gossip tales. But his wife and son, taught by their own conscious experience that such hypocrisy was very possible at any age, kept silence, and believed him guilty still.

June came; and they went to London; and Edwin seemed to be so attentive to business, and his cousin so well pleased with him, that the father dismissed his fears, and the mother gave herself up entirely to new and pleasurable sensations—declaring that to see London sights, and to be shown them by her son, was one of the greatest enjoyments she had ever known, or could conceive of. But before the visit ended Austin thought he discovered that his cousin had two manners towards Edwin,—a cordial one whenever he was present and observing him, and a cold reserved one when he fancied the father's eyes were not upon him. But when he

mentioned his suspicions to his wife, she laughed them to scorn, attributing them to the over watchfulness of an anxious parent; and Austin, glad perhaps of an excuse not to inquire too closely, professed his belief that she was right in all probability; and he returned home satisfied with his visit, with his cousin, and his son.

A second and a third year passed away without any material occurrence or change taking place, and Edwin's prospects appeared the same as usual, in spite of Brograve's hints that all was not going on well at the chemist's in London, and of an assurance from him a few days after, that he had heard from undeniable authority that Edwin was suspected of having robbed the till, and that lavender water and other perfumes were in the habit of vanishing very fast in, it was supposed, presents to a certain lady. This charge against the honesty of his child, which Austin believed to be unimpeached, he heard with contempt and indignation. But his poor wife, recollecting the transaction of the purse, did not inveigh against the falsehood of the report with the same eager and unforced resentment which he did; and *her* night after this conversation was much more restless and sleepless than her husband's. A few days after came a letter from Mr Williams, accompanied by one from Edwin, which to a suspicious nature, as Austin's was now become relative to Edwin, served only too forcibly to corroborate the truth of Brograve's statement. Mr Williams, simply, though guardedly, said, that finding his cousin Edwin on a trial of three years disliked the business, which aversion on his part had occasioned some quarrels between them, he had offered to give him up the rest of his time; and that this offer, subject to the approbation of his parents, Edwin had gladly accepted.

Edwin's letter said much the same; with this addition, that having found his cousin Williams on acquaintance a very suspicious and close temper, he wished to go into a counting-house rather than remain with him; and having heard of such a situation, he only waited for his father's consent to give his answer.

It was a long time before the anxious and disappointed parents could make up their minds what answer to send to Edwin; but at length poor Austin exclaimed, "At least he shall not have it to say that I thwarted his inclinations, and forced him to be what he did not like." Accordingly he wrote to Edwin, acquiescing, though with pain, in his change of business, and begging to know the name of the kind friend who had engaged to procure him the place in the counting-house.

The fact was, as Brograve had stated; Edwin had only too often taken money from the till, always meaning, as he said, to return it when he could. And at first, perhaps, he *did* repay it as soon as he got money. But "ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute," says the French proverb; and having only too often found in early life the impunity of guilt, he persisted in his depredations on the money and the perfumes, which were all given to Mrs Verney, and so profusely that Mr Williams took alarm, and charged him with the thefts just before his unsuspecting parents came to London.

But Edwin when taxed with his fault, was so undauntedly firm in his denial, so ready with a plausible excuse for the deficiencies Mr Williams observed, that the latter, who had great confidence in him, tried to believe he had accused him unjustly, though he resolved to watch him narrowly in future; and as the Austins were every day expected, he wished at least to defer any more examinations of Edwin till they were come and gone. For some time Edwin, being on his guard, ceased to commit the crime imputed to him; but, when Mrs Verney became distressed for money, he, on promise of speedy payment, like another Barnwell, again defrauded his indulgent master for another Millwood. Mr Williams having now detected him most clearly by means not worth relating, he told him he would no longer keep him in his house; but that as he was a relation he would not expose him nor would he afflict his excellent parents by a knowledge of his guilt. Accordingly he wrote the letter before alluded to; and one of Mrs Verney's lovers

having at her instigation procured Edwin the place of clerk in his uncle's counting-house, he was able to attribute his pretended wish to leave his cousin, to the prospect of a situation which he preferred. By return of post Edwin answered his father's questions, stating with truth the name of the gentleman who had been his friend, and the name of his employer; a name well known on 'Change. It was so much for the interest of his happiness that Austin should be deceived, that he was so; and he taught himself and his wife not only to look on Brograve's information as mere calumnious gossip, but to think his cousin Williams' letter was the truth, and the *whole* truth. In the meanwhile Edwin went to his new employment, with which in all his letters he expressed himself delighted; and well he might; for such was the plausibility of his manners that he soon conciliated the regard and obtained the confidence of his superiors; and he had not been in the house more than a year, when he communicated to his father the welcome intelligence, that the head of the firm had bidden him, if he continued to be what he then was, look forward to being one day perhaps received as a partner. How welcome to his father's heart was this intelligence! how gratifying to the affectionate pride of his mother! not only because they had now reason to suppose their son was likely to make his fortune, but because it was a testimony to his industry and good conduct; and when soon after he had written this letter he obtained leave to pay them a visit, the second which they had had from him in the course of the year, as they were both too unwell to venture on a journey to London again, never had they welcomed him with more fondness, and never had he seemed more worthy of such a welcome. In vain did Brograve, after Edwin was gone, assure the Austins that their son was met on the road by a lady in a post-chaise, with whom he drove off, and not on the London road. They gave no credit to the tale, though it was very true, that Mrs Verney, having on speculation followed an officer to his country quarters which were near the

town of ——, Edwin had promised to rob his parents of a day or two to devote to her.

The next year, Edwin came again, and whether it was that, conscious how miserable his father and mother would be if they suspected the conduct he was in reality pursuing, he felt himself impelled by remorseful tenderness to pay them all the affectionate attention in his power, or whether he was impressed by a sort of foreboding consciousness that he might meet with an untimely fate, and never behold them more,—it is certain that in filial love, and all those delicate attentions which mark a heart deeply impressed with feelings of respect and duty, Edwin had never shone so amiably conspicuous as he did in this last visit to L——; and had not the old man caught him, as he imagined, in some evident evasions, some alarming disingenuousness, all anxiety would have been lost in parental pride and well-founded hope.

Some few months after this last visit, Austin observed that Edwin's letters were not so clearly expressed as usual, and that his hand writing bore evident marks of agitation. He happened at this time to receive a letter from Mr Maple, in which that gentleman told him, that his wife's sister, having gone from keeper to keeper, was now completely lost in the lowest stage of profligacy, and would soon, he expected, be reduced to poverty, rags, and an untimely death.

"If," cried Austin, clasping his hands with agony, "if this woman's wretched state should have any thing to do with my son's altered style and trembling hand!" and he could not banish the idea from his mind again. Not, as the incoherency of his letters increased, could he refrain from mentioning to Edwin his conviction that something weighed upon his mind,—conjuring him at the same time, if his suspicions were just, to have the courage to confide in his *best friends*, his only *true friends*, the parents who lived *for* and *in* him, and promising him unlimited pardon and assistance also, to the utmost of their power, could they but *serve* and *save* him.

To this letter, blotted with the tears of parental affec-

tion and dictated by its warmest feelings, they received no answer.

The next day Brograve called on them in the afternoon, and Austin absolutely started at sight of him, fearing that he came to communicate no pleasant tidings. But though he looked full of meaning, and observed them with the most scrutinizing attention, he only talked of indifferent things, and never mentioned Edwin. Yet still, something seemed every now and then on his lip, which he hastily and almost with a tear in his eye suppressed; while his manner seemed so unusually gentle and even affectionate, that Austin's fears became almost insupportable, and his unwonted kindness alarmed him even more than his usual brutality had done.—Indeed the news which he had heard, and which he saw by their manner had not yet reached their ears and their *hearts*, was of a nature too shocking even for him to endure to be the first communicator of it;—till unable to keep silence, yet still more unable to break it, he wrung Austin's hand with affectionate energy, and bidding him good night in a faltering tone, he ran out of the house.

“What can this mean?” murmured Austin, wiping from his brow the damps which terror had gathered there.

“I never saw Mr Brograve so moved, and so low,” observed Mrs Austin.

“And is that all you saw in him?” asked her more quick-sighted husband.

“Yes—what was there else to see?”

“O wife! wife! dear, unsuspecting being!” exclaimed Austin, “it will be an age till tomorrow's post comes in!” And Mrs Austin when informed of what he augured from Brograve's unusual manners, ridiculed his fears as those of a nervous man.

The anxiously expected post came in, only too soon for the unhappy parents; for it brought the following letter from Mr Williams:

“Sorry indeed am I, my much esteemed relatives, to be forced to tell you such terrible news of your unhappy and infatuated son! He has absconded, to save his life.”

(" He *lives* then ! " screamed out his mother, " and that's something ; " while his father, scarcely able to think his life, with loss of his honor, worth preserving, shook his head mournfully, and proceeded with the letter, which his wife read over his shoulder.) " The fact is, that madly devoted to a wicked woman, a Mrs Verney, he has, to save her from a jail, made free with some money entrusted to his care ; and having sold India bonds to a considerable amount, he is suspected of having endeavored to set fire to the premises in order to conceal his theft by destroying the remaining bonds and papers. The combustible matter was however discovered just in time, and your son and the wretched woman escaped together. However such a reward is offered for his apprehension as an *incendiary*, and such an accurate description of his person and dress is posted up in large letters on the walls *here*, and is sent to every principal town in the kingdom, that I dare not bid you expect he will escape being seized."

Long before he read to the end of this dreadful letter, the wretched father had ceased to see, petrified and almost senseless from this overwhelming stroke ; and his more wretched because self-upbraiding wife had fallen, unperceived by him, deprived of sense on the floor.— At length, however, a deep groan roused him from his trance, and looking round, the prostrate form and death like cheek of his beloved companion met his view, and restored him to himself.

" Thank God ! " he exclaimed, " I have yet one being left to love, and live for ; aye, and for whose sake I must learn to be calm and patient." Then lifting her up, he took her in his arms, laid her gently on her bed, and when she recovered she found her head reposing on the bosom of her husband.

" I am spared to you still, remember," said he, " and you to me ; therefore we are not destitute, and for each other's sake we must meet and bear our hard fate with fortitude and resignation."

" You may," she answered, " for you have nothing to blame yourself for ;—I have,—and it weighs *here* like a



mountain of earth," she wildly exclaimed, laying her hand on her heart.

"What weighs there, my beloved?—Nothing ought to do so, I am sure; and these are only the suggestions of a too tender conscience."

His wife tried to speak, but emotion choked her; and it was hours before the poor soul could unburthen her mind by telling her husband of the circumstance of the usher's purse, and the early but striking proof of a tendency to dishonesty which she had, lest he should punish Edwin, concealed from his father. A deep sigh was at first Austin's only answer; but at length he bade *her* be consoled by what consoled *him*, namely that she had *meant* well; and the rest was in the hands of a wise and benevolent Being, who would judge the *motives* as well as the *results* of actions.

"Oh! what a night of misery was passed by these unhappy parents! Towards morning they fell into a perturbed sleep, from which they gradually awoke to consciousness. But when the whole of that consciousness burst upon them,—when instead of praying for their son, which they always did on waking, as their pride and their support, they now beheld him in idea as the shame and the disgrace of their being, and could scarcely dare to pray that he might escape the death due to his misdeeds,—they loathed the light of the sun, and wished their Creator would deign to take them to his presence and his mercy.

The post that afternoon brought them a letter from Edwin, the direction of which was in a disguised hand; the postmark was London. It was as follows; "How shall I dare to address you, most wronged of parents!—Inconsistent, incoherent, did you call my letters? Well they might be so! But you will know *why* only too soon! Expect never to see me more! unless I am taken; and then I trust that, before I shall undergo the sentence of the law, you will deign to come and pronounce my pardon.—But taken I shall not be, I believe,—and for *your sakes* I hope that *your son*, pure and virtuous beings, will

not disgrace you by dying on a scaffold, though for myself I care not. O dear, indulgent, tender mother! how I feel for your sufferings! I was so much your *pride*!—Well, well—it is all over now—the die is cast—farewell!—farewell!—and if possible *forget me*! Yet one word more; do not reproach yourselves, *pray* don't, for letting me go to London. If you had not consented, I should have gone nevertheless; for I was bent on going, and also on seeing *HER* again.—So don't blame yourselves.—O God! to think that I must never see you again!—Farewell!

“Once more—I resume—How truly you said, ‘you were my only friends, my only true friends, and you alone lived *for* and *in* me!’ But *do* live, I charge you! don't curse me by dying.—I forgot—you are good people, and will live out your appointed time, come what may.—But what was I saying?—O that you were indeed my only friends!—for she, even *she*—but no matter—Oh! I am a wild and desperate man!—yes a man without a name—.”

What a letter for such parents to receive from a son who was dearer to them than life itself! Still it spoke a heart not absolutely callous, and feelings not absolutely depraved.

“If he can but escape to America,” cried Austin, “all may be well yet;—and if he should settle and do well there, who knows but we may go over, and end our old days with him!”

As the darkest cloud produces the brightest lightning, so it is a wise provision in our nature, that the deepest misery should often produce the brightest beam of hope;—else life must often sink under the pressure of unexpected calamity; but Hope, like a guardian angel, hovers, near, and at least *suspends* if it cannot *remove* the suffocating pressure.

During the first days of their distress the Austins received *no one*, but shut up their shop, and closed all their windows to the street. “When I shall venture to walk out again I know not!” said Austin; for he dreaded to

see the advertisement respecting his son on the wall ; “ But we will see our friends,—for you know, my love, none but *real* friends would call on us now ;—however, as our parish church is very near us, and we can go without running any risk of——I mean without being forced to go through any streets, we had better show ourselves there next Sunday, and then those who like will call.”

“ Church ! Oh ! no no, I dare not, cannot go to church, James ! indeed I can't. To have people staring at us, and perhaps looking disdainfully at us on account of our lost son ; aye, even those who used to speak so prettily ! ”

“ Woman ! ” replied her husband, “ whom need you mind, whom need you fear, while in the temple, and the presence as it were, of your Creator !—that God who is said to love those whom he chasteneth ; that God in whose eyes all on earth are equal, and in comparison with whom the best of us are frail, the wisest foolish ! ” And Mrs Austin, after a struggle with herself, consented to go to church next Sunday. How violent and sudden grief alters all, save the young ! Austin's hair was rendered by some days of suffering entirely white, though only partly colored before ; and both he and his wife, though scarcely to be called old, seemed since their sorrows to be advanced at least ten years in age.

When Sunday came, Mrs Austin's heart again failed her ;—and she dreaded to encounter the eye of scorn and neglect. “ And whom would it disgrace ? ” cried Austin, “ the scorners or the scorned ?—Why, even Brograve, you see, was awed into respect by our ‘ great griefs ’ the other day.”

“ True, very true,” replied she ; and was cheered by that recollection.

Like all fearful, nervous persons, poor Mrs Austin contrived to increase her difficulties by shrinking from encountering them ;—and she was so long before she could prevail on herself to set off for church, that the congregation was assembled, and the clergyman was entering the desk, when the trembling couple, exhibiting, as Sterne calls

it, the venerable presence of misery, slowly walked up the aisle, and tottering into their pew, were glad to hide their disordered countenances in the act of preparatory prayer. Mistaken woman! to expect scorn and neglect! Our miseries, aye even our disgraces, are soon forgiven us; it is our *prosperities* that are difficult to forgive. There was scarcely an eye but turned with encouraging kindness on these sufferers under undeserved calamity, and mere acquaintances prepared for them the greetings of friends.

One of the lessons for the day happened to be the forty-fifth chapter of Genesis, and the voice of the reader was observed to falter several times while reading the concluding verses; for a suppressed sob at intervals reached his ears from the attentive mother of Edwin, and when he pronounced "And Israel said, It is enough—Joseph, my son, is yet alive—I will go and see him before I die!" the sob became so audible that he was glad his task of reading was ended.

"James! James!" whispered Mrs Austin, "remember what you said about America! I was thinking of that." When service was over, the clergyman, who correctly practised the precepts of that gospel which he preached, gave the Austins such a kind and respectful bow as he passed down the aisle, that others, if they had not been disposed to do so before, would have done it in order to follow his example;—for he was a country gentleman and a man of great influence and fortune, as well as a clergyman. As soon as this gentleman, (Mr Heberden,) had taken off his robes, he returned up the aisle, to walk down it with the Austins, hoping by that means to keep off from them a number of persons, who might by well meant but officious civility upset the evidently weak spirits of the afflicted mother. To the truly benevolent of both sexes, these sort of thoughtful courtesies and attentions are known as it were intuitively, and Mr Heberden had the satisfaction of seeing that his kindness succeeded. Besides, Mrs Austin felt her consequence increased by his presence; and when at the church

door he invited himself to drink tea with them that afternoon, she was able with tolerable composure to tell him they would be glad to see him. He came; and, as might be expected from such a visiter, he spoke comfort to their troubled souls, as oil thrown on the rough waters soothes them to a calm. He read their son's letter—dwelt most on the good parts of it, and the proofs of strong compunction which it evinced; and finding how much they loved to hope that he could escape to America, and they ultimately join him there, he said as much as truth warranted to confirm their hopes. And certain it is, that the calmness and fortitude which were from this day forward visible in both these sufferers, was owing to the piety and kindness of this admirable man. Such is the duty, and such the soothing power, of the truly conscientious preacher of the doctrines of peace!

Austin now forced himself into his shop as usual, and even tolerated as much as ever the visits of Brograve; who, though he was, as forbearing as he was capable of being, could not help now and then talking of spoiled children, and their never turning out well,—congratulating himself on the excellent method in which he had brought up his son.

Affliction had so humbled and subdued Mrs Austin, that she could now endure these vain boastings without saying a word in reply; and Austin felt that to resent them would be beneath him. He had however only too soon the means of revenge in his power, and he took advantage of it—but it was the revenge of a man and a CHRISTIAN. Brograve's son had always trembled in his presence, and his father's frown was as terrible to him almost as death itself. It was also true that Brograve, afraid of allowing him much, lest he should teach him to be extravagant, ran into a contrary extreme, and really did not allow him enough to enable him to support the appearance of a gentleman. The consequence was, that Hugh ran in debt as long as his credit lasted; when finding himself involved beyond the power of extricating himself, and not daring to confess his faults to his father in

order to ask relief from him, he had in a fatal hour recourse to forgery ; and having drawn a bill for a considerable amount in the name of his employer on a certain bank, he received the money, and paid many of his debts with it before the fraud was detected. When it was, he had, luckily for him, intimation of the discovery time enough to set sail for America with the remainder of the sum.

“ So ! ” cried Mrs Austin, when she heard this intelligence, “ this is the end of all his boasting, is it ! Well—I don’t see but your wise parents are as badly off as your foolish ones, for *my* part. But he is afflicted now, poor man, and I am heartily sorry for him, for I know only too well how to feel for his sorrow—and if I did not fear he would think I came to insult him, I would go and call on him ! ”

“ That ’s a good woman,” replied Austin affectionately, “ and the last part of your speech has made up for the first ; you are right—he would think you came to insult him ; and as a woman ought not to risk the brutality of such a man, you shall *not* go to him—but I *will* ; for I had rather he should tell me I took the trouble of coming merely to triumph in his misery, than that he should be able to say, what he would say if I did *not* call, namely, that I despised him too much to come near him ; there is no being on one’s guard against tempers of that sort ; all therefore one has to do is, to act *right* towards such persons, regardless of the consequences.” Accordingly, forgetting all his faults in his misfortunes, the truly christian and benevolent Austin set off for the house of Brograve. He saw Austin coming, and as he drew nigh he shut the door in his face, exclaiming, “ There—I knew you would—I knew you would come to insult and triumph over me ; but you shall not come in.”

“ Let me speak to you,” said Austin through the window, “ answer me honestly ; If I had *not* come ; should you not have said ‘ There ! I knew he would not come, he despises me too much ? ’ ”

“ Very likely I should,” replied Brograve surlily.

“But as *I am* come, suppose you are so kind as to take my visit as it was meant, and receive me as one whom fate has fitted to sympathize most tenderly and truly with you by afflicting me in a like manner to yourself, and give your feelings the comfort of a companion and a soother like me—let us brothers in affliction, be a support to each other!”

Brograve was not proof against this address, and his door and even his heart were opened to him immediately.

“Well,—now you are here,” said Brograve, “perhaps you can decide a question which puzzles me,—namely, which is the greater rascal, your son or mine?”

“That must depend,” replied Austin, after a pause, and making an effort to subdue the pain occasioned him by this abrupt and coarse question, “that must depend on the comparative degree of temptation which each underwent; and on the degree of their penitence.”

“Penitence! Yes,—my son has a fine notion of penitence indeed! Yours at least is a civil spoken rascal,—but what do you think of mine? There’s a letter for you!” said he, giving Austin a letter from his son. It was indeed a terrible letter; for it reproached his father with his avarice, and the terror he had excited in him,—imputing to his mean allowance his temptation to run in debt, and to his parental tyranny the fear that prevented him from applying to him as a friend and father; and ended by assuring him that he considered him as the cause of, and therefore as responsible for, all his crimes.

“At least my son did not write me such a letter as that,” said Austin proudly.

“And therefore,” cried Brograve, “I am willing to admit he is the lesser rascal of the two.”

My readers will not be surprised to hear that this similarity in suffering endeared to Austin and his wife the once disagreeable society of Brograve, and that he was never so easy as when he was with them. Misfortune had indeed a salutary effect on him; and till he had thus fatally lost the society of his son, a father’s feelings had never been fully awakened in his bosom; now, he

pined after that child, whom his own narrow tyranny had alienated ; and though almost reduced to a mere pittance by his son's debts, which his rigid honesty had made him pay to the uttermost farthing, he longed to see him to pronounce his pardon,—and, could he have afforded it, would have followed him to America. But he could not go without carrying with him the means of subsistence, and to do that he was incapable. Nor could Austin assist him ; for he had insisted on knowing the amount of the sums of which Edwin had defrauded both Mr Williams and his last employer ; and having paid the latter with great inconvenience to himself, he was forced to be contented with paying the other by instalments.

But Brograve was an object of *envy* to the Austins ; for he knew that his son was safely landed in America, as a letter had been received from him. But it was certain that Edwin, even if he had sailed for that country, was not arrived,—because, if he had, he would immediately have written to his parents. Therefore the unhappy Austins could only picture Edwin to their imaginations as skulking about some part of the United Kingdoms, a disgraced and trembling outcast, a reward set upon his life, and his only prospect an ignominious death, for though the money which he had stolen had been paid by his father,—the prosecutor, being well convinced of his guilt, would not, or could not, give up his design of trying to make an example of him as an incendiary.

A circumstance now took place which called the feelings of the susceptible Austins into as keen, if not keener agony than they had as yet experienced, though the circumstance itself was of a most pleasurable nature. They were one day surprised by a visit from a gentleman who was an utter stranger to them, and who announcing himself to be an attorney, said he was come to communicate to them the contents of a will. This gentleman was a man of benevolent feelings ; and seeing in the countenances of both an expression of deep rooted care, and observing the now denuded state of the house, (for they had sold all the furniture which they did not absolutely



want,) he flattered himself that pecuniary embarrassments had occasioned their evident dejection; he therefore felt his voice choked, and his utterance impeded, by kind and agreeable emotion, while he prepared to read to them the contents of the parchment which he took out of his pocket. But at length, shaking off his feelings, he read with a firm voice, expecting to be interrupted every moment by exclamations of joyful surprise, that "Joshua Snelling, &c. gave and bequeathed to James Austin, the son of his first cousin, the sum of twenty thousand pounds, and a house and garden in Kent, besides plate and furniture."—*Surprise* he did indeed behold, but no *joy*; and when he had ended, he saw the legatee clasp his hands together with the close convulsive grasp of agony, while sobbing as if her heart would burst, his agitated wife hid her face on the shoulder of her husband.

"What can this mean? exclaimed the attorney at last, after a pause of pity and astonishment; "I hoped I came to give you joy—and it seems that the good news I bring has only served to distress you!"

"It ought not, sir; but in these first moments it does; for joy, I fear, *our* hearts can never know more," replied Austin in a faltering tone. "But this is, I know, sir, a wrong feeling, and an ungrateful one to the Being, who has thus filled us with good things, especially as, though not happy ourselves, it will be a great privilege to contribute to make others so. Come, my dear wife! cheer up, and look our good fortune bonnily in the face!"—On which Mrs Austin suddenly exclaiming, "If he should be safe abroad, husband, we may follow, and all be rich together!" wiped her eyes, adjusted her cap, and begged the gentleman to drink a glass of wine, and make himself comfortable while he stayed. In a few minutes Austin had hinted enough of his sad story to affect and interest his auditor; who, having given his address, and discussed every necessary point, thought it right to leave the Austins to the unrestrained indulgence of their feelings; but when he bade them farewell, he desired Austin not to scruple to employ him in any way that could be serviceable to him or his son.

Mixed and overpowering indeed were the feelings which he left them to indulge ! and for awhile, the regret that this fortune did not come years ago, and soon enough to have given Edwin other prospects in life, swallowed up the sensation of thankfulness for its having come at last ; but more proper emotions succeeded, and the evening was cheered by the whispers of consoling hope and the aspirations of pious gratitude.

“Well,” said Austin, the next morning when he rose, “my wealth will be of use to poor Brograve, however ; for I will pay his outfit to America, and lend him money for all his purposes.” Nor was it long before the now even affectionate Brograve, assisted by the liberal aid of Austin, set sail for America. The latter had first obtained a solemn promise from him, that he would not reproach his son when he saw him ; but as severity had failed, try what kindness would do—“And be sure,” added he, “if you meet with my poor boy, or hear any thing of him ; tell him we are become rich, and long to follow him, and share our plenty with him !”—“Tell him,” added Mrs Austin, “that we have no joy in our riches, till he shares them with us !” And Brograve, more moved then ever he was in his life, wrung their hands in silence, and left them with a full and aching heart.

Would that Edwin had been so fortunate as to escape to America ! would that an affectionate father had been hastening to him ! but he, obliged to hide himself from the keen eye of justice, and not daring to attempt to get on board any vessel, was wandering over Ireland, over Scotland, and over England, associating with the wicked and the idle, and sinking consequently every day still lower in the scale of creation ; while he sought to drown the sense of misery in drunkenness,—misery increased by the desertion and narrowly escaped treachery of the woman who had been his seducer and his ruin. Yes ; wandering thus amongst ruffians, and wearing the disguise of one, under a feigned name, and every trace of his former self obscured, exposed to all the blasts of wintry nights, and hiding during the day in lone unwholesome dwellings, was

he whose birth was hailed with the warmest parental rapture, whose infancy was reared upon a mother's bosom, and whose welfare, from the first hour of his existence to the present agonizing one of his shame and his wickedness, was the first object of a father's care, a father's prayers!

But though Hugh Brograve was indeed so fortunate as to reach America in safety; as change of place does not produce change of mind, he was in the New World just what he had been in the Old; and having joined a set of very notorious men, he was stabbed in a drunken frolic, just before his unhappy father landed; and was dying of a mortification, which rapidly came on, when his too late repentant father sought him out, and appeared unexpectedly at his bedside. In vain did the afflicted old man hang over his pillow with agonizing affection. The vindictive Hugh loaded him with reproaches, imputing his crimes and even his untimely death to his parental severity and pernicious system of education, and died with expressions of the same unrelenting anger on his lips;—and the wretched father returned to England childless, poor, and almost broken hearted.

But to return to the Austins—Though they occasionally *suspected* the life Edwin must be leading, they were not *sure* of it, and it was necessary they should *hope* in order to *exist*. They therefore *did* hope,—though they well knew that had their son any good tidings of himself to impart, he would have written immediately. They felt sensibly indeed the loss of Brograve's society, so powerful is the tie of sympathy, so endearing is equality in any thing!

“What say you, wife?” said Austin, after the legacy tax was paid, and he had received the first dividends of his fortune; “what say you to paying a visit to our house in Kent?—And suppose as change of scene and new occupations are of use, it is said, to the sorrowful; suppose, I say, that we go and live there entirely? We do not want to keep shop now, we have so good a fortune, and our neighbor's son Ralph would be very glad to take

it, as the lad wants a business, and has a wife in his eye."

"I should like it of all things," said Mrs Austin; "and if we do not approve of our new house, we can come back again. But somehow, since our poor child's misconduct, I have never been able to look our friends here in the face as I used to do—and I shall not be sorry, therefore, to change my abode. Besides, if we altered our way of living here, people would say we were grown proud."

"Yes," observed Austin, "and if we did not, they would say we were mean—so we had better go at once."

"I am glad you think so, my dear; for though to be sure I can never be a lady, still I know I have a generous spirit, and if I am visited I will have a good table."

"That you will, I am sure," cried Austin; "and I am glad for your sake that my relation, though he never noticed me during his life, did so handsomely by me at his death."

Austin immediately settled his affairs at L——, departed for Kent, followed by regrets from his acquaintance and friends, and blessings from the poor, and in a few weeks was settled in a very pretty house on Blackheath, surrounded by a large garden. With that propriety which always accompanies good sense in every situation of life, Austin resolved to have every thing necessary for comfort, and nothing for show. Their establishment therefore consisted only of two maid servants, and a gardener who did not sleep in the house, but in a cottage adjoining; and he kept a low chaise with one horse, in which he could with safety drive his wife round the beautiful country surrounding them; resolving in the summer time to keep a saddle horse for himself besides—if he could do so on trial, consistent with his resolution to set apart such a sum yearly for charitable purposes. Mrs Austin had certainly not been so happy since her misfortunes as she now was; for she had constant and pleasant occupation in arranging her new house, and could she but hope to live to see Edwin in it, she should

have nothing more to desire!—Austin too had his enjoyments; he was fond of a garden, and he had now a very excellent one;—he liked old china too, and his cupboards were full of it;—old plate he had also in abundance, and so much more than they wanted, that he wished to sell part of it;—but his wife had not yet done looking at and admiring it—nor as yet, since winter was not quite set in, were her fears of robbers sufficient to induce her to consent to the removal of the chest to the safer protection of their banker in London.

Whoever has travelled in stage coaches of any description must have observed the excessive and unconquerable taciturnity of some of the passengers, and the unconquerable garrulity and communicativeness of others; and “Whose house is that, sir?” has been often answered by a torrent of unnecessary and tedious information relative to the parties residing in it. As Austin was getting out of his gig at his own door while a stage coach was passing, one of the passengers said, “What a pretty house that is! and though lonely, what a lovely situation!”

“Yes, madam, it is,” replied a communicative traveller, “and that old man you see at the door is its owner. He was, I am told, a shopkeeper somewhere, when Mr Snelling, his distant relation died, and left him, besides a handsome fortune, that house and garden, with plate, furniture, and so forth! There was a lucky man, madam!”

“He was indeed, sir; and I hope he will have the spirit to spend his money, now he has gotten it!”

“Why, madam he is no dasher. I waited on him on a little business the other day; and if his wife had not been at home I should not have known half what he had gotten by his relation’s will. But she showed me a great chestfull of beautiful old plate, and such fine old china! but some of the plate they are going to sell soon; and indeed I advised their moving it all; for it really is not safe in such a place to have so much valuable matter in the house.”

"Very true, sir," said the lady, and began a long story of house-breakers, and the danger of a friend of hers; which story was answered by one of a similar kind by the gentleman; while apparently half if not quite asleep in the corner sat a middle aged man, wrapped up in a great coat, who had seemed all the time totally uninterested in the conversation that was going forward. This person, when they were on the middle of the heath, desired to be set down; and as he got out, he wished his fellow passengers a good evening, though in an uncourteous tone; and the lady meeting, as he spoke, a glance from his dark eyes, which was not certainly of an admiring nature, she declared, when he was gone, that she did not like his looks, and was very glad they had got rid of him. Alas! the lady happened to be more right than such hasty physiognomists commonly are.

The preceding week, Austin had driven his wife to London, where she had made many purchases; and ever since her return he had seen her very busy at her needle, while sometimes he had surprised her weeping over her work. There was a time in the year when he had seen her thus before, and his own feelings gave him a clue to hers; but he said nothing, and took no notice of her emotion.

The day after the conversation in the stage coach took place was passed by both parents in evident dejection and silent abstraction, except when one of them made an effort to talk, in order to conceal agitation, or to endeavor to amuse the other. The dinner was as usual, with the single addition of a *favorite dish of Edwin's*; but the meal was scarcely *tasted*, and certainly not *enjoyed*.

In the evening, Austin drew his chair closer to his wife's, and holding her hand in his, while he rested his right foot on the fender,—“My dear wife,” said he, “we are very silly people, and needlessly, I suspect, increase our own miseries, by hiding in our bosoms what, if shared, would be less painful. I know that I have been going about all day with a consciousness which it would have lightened my heart much to mention to you.”

"And I am conscious of the same," replied Mrs Austin bursting into tears; "but I feared to afflict you by reminding you that this is our poor boy's birthday."

"And I you," said Austin in a faltering voice; "but I did not forget it, nor have I indeed ever forgotten it."

"Neither have I, husband; and perhaps you will *laugh* at me, but I must tell you;—I always, you know, used to make something for him, or buy him a present on his birthday; and I have done the same ever since we lost him. Last year I made him new shirts; this year I made him some neckcloths, but finer than ever,—the finest I could get, in honor of our new riches. See here, James! what handsome ones they are!" (taking one out of her work-drawer.) Austin certainly did not laugh, and at first he could not speak.

"My love," said he at length, "and truly the wife of my heart, I should hardly laugh at a proof of tenderness which, if it be a weakness, I have been guilty of myself; for *I* too have always remembered our poor child's birthday, and, as usual, bought him a present. Last year I bought him books; this year I was tempted by this gold watch and chain, (giving it into her hand,) that he may know, whatever he may have deserved from us, I never even in the midst of his errors forgot he was my child, and a most dear one too!" Here a pause of strong emotion succeeded, and the glittering gift was laid on the table again, dimmed with a mother's tears.

To this mournful silence succeeded the usual soothing topics of hopes to come, of repentance in Edwin, of reunion with him in another country, or, if not, certainly in another world.

Alas! how different at that moment were the feelings and the prospects of the ill-fated Edwin! Those affections which formed the only solace of his parents' griefs, and inspired them with ever-soothing hope, served but to increase the agony of his, and to add bitterness to the dictates of despair. Still he in fancy heard his father's kind and deeply-impressive accents, still saw his mother's eyes turning on him with looks of ever-admiring fondness;

while that devotion terror-bred which raised his faded eyes to heaven, murmured out for them the prayer he dared not breathe for himself.—Still did he recall with vain but tender regret the humble abode of his beloved parents, and could he but once more repose beneath the paternal roof, he thought his utmost wishes would be indeed accomplished.

But that parental home, that mother's smile, that father's love, which he well knew not even his crimes had deprived him of, shone on him through the thick gloom of his surrounding misery, like the distant and envied light of some high-seated dwelling to the closing eyes of a benighted and sinking traveller; holding out the tantalizing promise of that safety, and that comfort, to which he knows that his exhausted strength will not allow him to attain.

Little did Edwin suspect the improved fortunes of his parents; little did he imagine with what new and mingled feelings they were, in their now elegant abode, commemorating his birth-day!

Austin and his ever sanguine wife, lost in the contemplation of happiness to come, continued to sit over the dying embers of their fire, till the hour of eleven struck,—till the maids were in bed; till the gardener was gone home, and all seemed at rest but themselves. “And here we are,” cried Mrs Austin, “sitting with our window open, as if we were in our town!” “However,” replied Austin, “there is no one to see us; but I will first go and see that the other part of the house is secure, then return to close this shutter, and lock up the watch. Mrs Austin meanwhile set the candles on the chimney-piece, while she folded up neatly on the table the neckcloths which she had taken out of the drawers, turning her back to the window as she did so. While thus employed, she heard from the parlor adjoining a violent noise, as of persons making a forcible entry; and opening the door, she saw her husband struggling with two men. Screaming violently she was rushing forward to his assistance, when she was forcibly held back by



some one behind her, who, no doubt attracted by the glittering of the watch, had entered the house at the window; and as she redoubled her cries, her assailant exclaimed with a dreadful oath, "I'll silence you woman." Then with a knife he instantly struck her bleeding, dying, though not insensible, on the ground; and he was proceeding to assist the work of death in the next room, when the light from the chimney-piece glared on the face of Mrs Austin, who now turned her closing eyes towards him; and while terror and astonishment bereaved him of the power of motion, he in his victim, saw and recognised his mother!

Spite of his disguise (for what can hide a child from the quick eye of an affectionate mother?) she saw, she recognised him; and when she stretched out her hand to him in token of forgiveness, as she read the wildness of horror and surprise on his countenance, he uttered a deep groan, and sunk in agony beside her. It was indeed her wretched and guilty son; who having at length joined a gang of highwaymen and housebreakers, one of whom was the man in the stage-coach, had been called upon by his comrades that night, on his return from a distant scene of villany, to join them in an attack on a house full of plate in the neighborhood! Maternal tenderness, the ruling passion still strong in death, revived Mrs Austin for awhile; and raising herself with great effort, she gazed with anxious inquiry on Edwin; when seeing her husband nearly overpowered by the ruffians, she uttered a noise of affright, and pushed Edwin with her arm as he lay. That action, and his father's voice in a tone of entreaty and distress, roused him from his momentary stupor; and seizing the knife yet reeking with a mother's blood, he rushed between his prostrate father and the uplifted blow of destruction; while his astonished comrades beheld their accomplice converted into their assailant.

Whatever was the cause, they found he fought in earnest; but they had given him a wound which would soon have made him defenceless, when the gardener, and

a friend who had been luckily sleeping at his house hearing the noise, rushed in armed with clubs; and the villains were glad to make a precipitate retreat through the window.

The anxious wife and apprehensive mother seemed to struggle with death till this glad moment arrived. She had seen her wretched son fly to save his father's life, and she had seen him accomplish his purpose! It was enough; and when Edwin again throwing himself beside her, exclaimed, "Mother, mother, don't curse me, I have saved him, I have saved him!" hanging over her in agonies that mocked the power of words; while her husband, exhausted with fatigue, and almost paralyzed with horror, crawled towards her and supported her head upon his breast; she moved her lips as if pronouncing Edwin's pardon; she tried to press his bloody hand to her mouth; then falling back on the bosom of Austin, she expired without a struggle or a groan.

At this moment the blood from the wound which Edwin had received gushed out with frightful violence, and he fell a corpse on the body of his mother.

When the gardener and his friend returned from a vain pursuit of the ruffians, wonder and horror almost chained up their faculties as they beheld the scene before them, and saw the old man sitting, like one bereft of reason, gazing on his dead wife and on his bleeding child. At length wildly starting up, he exclaimed "*Take notice, he is my son; he saved my life; and this wound he received in my defence! Why don't you go for help?—Monsters, would you let him bleed to death?*" And as he uttered the last word he sunk into a stupor that lasted several hours. But vain was every aid administered to Edwin; and even parental tenderness, when Austin's senses were thoroughly restored, could not regret that he did not survive the wound he had received.

For Austin had now the mournful satisfaction of seeing his son interred by the side of his mother, his crime concealed, and only his preservation of his father known; for who, as death had sealed the lips both of the culprit

and his victim, who could reveal the matricide? Edwin's accomplices had escaped, and even Austin could not have any certain knowledge of the fact, though he only too strongly suspected it; besides, as the coroner's inquest sat on the bodies while anguish had suspended in him the functions of reason, he could give no clue to the murder likely to involve Edwin in any suspicion of having been the perpetrator of it. Therefore, when Austin recovered his reason, he had the satisfaction of hearing that the verdict had been one of "Wilful murder against *persons unknown.*" But though, in spite of this verdict, Austin at some moments believed that his wife fell by the hand of Edwin, at other times he convinced himself that Edwin's only guilt was that of having joined a band of ruffians and housebreakers. Still, when on the morning of the funeral he gazed for the last time upon the corpse of his wife, and viewed that face which he had loved through *all its changes*, that face which it was the *only hope* of his oppressed heart that he should soon see again in a more perfect state of being, he turned suddenly to the other coffin, and cast a startled, doubting, and bewildered glance on the face, *once as dear*, of him who had, he feared deprived her of life. Then pointing to his dead son with fearful meaning and agonized expression, he raised his eyes to heaven in pious gratitude, and exclaimed, "Father! I thank thee; for this *indeed* was MERCY. Yes; poor deluded but affectionate boy!" added he; "whatever were thy crimes, thou hadst thy *wish*, and I *have* been spared the misery of seeing thee die upon a scaffold!"

P  
t  
b  
st  
st  
ixH  
T  
h  
fc  
to  
fu

## THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

A TALE, FOUNDED ON FACT.



IT is a well known saying, that “le vrai n’est pas toujours le vraisemblable,” or that the *true* does not always bear the semblance of truth. It is also certain that the incidents of real life are sometimes more incredible than any thing we read of in fictitious history ; and most of us can remember, probably, some well authenticated fact which happened in our memory, that has called forth the sneer of incredulity when it has at a distant period been communicated to others.

“Of the incidents which I am now going to relate,” says the writer of the following narrative, “I was myself an eye witness, and I was present when the heroine of my tale related such parts of her history, as had taken place before I knew her. Still, I am well aware that, though my veracity would not, nay could not, be doubted by those to whom I am known, I might be deemed by strangers not entitled to unqualified belief, because the story which I am going to tell, though certainly le vrai, is not the vraisemblable.”

I was the schoolfellow and favorite companion of the Honorable Frederic H——, afterwards Lord D——. True, I was some years his senior ; but circumstances had so much endeared us to each other, that we mutually forgot the difference in our ages ; and when I left school to study physic at Edinburgh, the separation was painfully felt by us both. I had saved the grateful child

from drowning, and he never forgot the obligation ; while I, on my side, became attached to him from the consciousness of the benefit which I had conferred ; nor did absence or distance obliterate either from the mind of the other. We kept up a constant correspondence ; and when I went to finish my studies at college, in order to take my degree at the university, it was a great joy to us both to meet again, and I was at least half a year at Trinity after Mr H—— was a resident there. At the end of that time I went to reside in a provincial town, in order to practice my profession. H—— having vainly tried to prevail on me to quit physic for the church, promising me a great living in his father's gift.

I had been settled about fifteen years, when H——, who had married at an early age an heiress chosen by his father, succeeded to the title of Viscount D—— ; but soon after he was rendered one of the most unhappy of men by the death of his wife, who died of her eighth lying-in, leaving him one son, their only surviving child. Beauty was his passion ; but his father had consulted more his interest than his taste in the choice of a wife, and Mrs H—— had certainly every qualification but beauty. However, her virtues and her talents had at length so won upon the excellent heart of her husband, that he had long ceased to remember that her personal charms were few, when death dissolved a union which had been a blessing to both, and my disconsolate friend wrote to beg me to hasten to him in my double capacity of friend and of physician. I did so, and found him oppressed not only by the grief which was already overwhelming him, but the fear of that which might too surely be impending ; for he thought his son was in great danger of following his beloved mother. I was only too much of the same opinion, and urged an immediate removal to a warmer climate ; to be brief, I was prevailed upon that I might devote myself entirely to my friend and his child, to abandon my profession, and take orders. Accordingly, I returned to college, and in due time I was qualified to accept a very excellent living in Lord

D——'s gift, which was on his estate ; but it was given to a gentleman to hold for me until I should return from abroad. I also took on myself the office of tutor to Lord D——'s son ; but just as every thing was settled for our setting off for the continent, to winter in some milder climate than our own, the object of our joint anxiety was carried off in a few days by an inflammation on the lungs ; and for many months Lord D—— gave way to his feelings of agonizing regret, in a manner that alarmed me for his mind. But at the end of that time he became more composed, and proposed to me that we should resume our plan of leaving England, and travel, without fixing any period for our return. In the interval between his quitting college and his marriage, Lord D—— had visited the continent, and had imbibed such a taste for foreign manners, and the foreign style of levity, that he would fain have persuaded his lady to reside with him abroad for a few years ; but she could never be prevailed upon to consent ; and he loved her too well to urge what, he saw, was displeasing to her. Now, however, there was no obstacle to his putting his design in execution—and curiosity made me as eager to go, as preference made him. But as Lord D——, who had seen France, was unacquainted with Spain and Portugal, he resolved to embark at Falmouth for Lisbon, and enter France by the Pyrennees. To Falmouth therefore we repaired ; but the wind being against our embarkation, we were reluctantly obliged to prepare for an abode of perhaps many days at an inn. The delay, however, was of little consequence to me, as I was deeply engaged in reading Horace, of whom I was meditating a translation ; therefore, to me all places were nearly alike ; but that restlessness, ever the attendant on recently experienced affliction, made Lord D——very impatient of our enforced delays.

One evening, our projected walk having been put a stop to by the threatening appearance of the clouds, I sat down to my Horace ; and Lord D——, as was too often the case with him, instead of endeavoring to employ his

mind in reading, or writing, began his walk up and down the room. Suddenly, however, I was conscious that he turned to the window, which looked into a large garden at the back of the house, and it was not long before I heard him exclaim, "Heavens! what an angel!" However, I went on reading; for knowing his passion for children, and having seen a very lovely child about the house, I concluded this sweet girl was now playing in the garden.

"How beautiful! Do, Moreton, come and look at her!" again cried Lord D——.

"Not now, my dear lord, for I have seen her, and she is very pretty indeed."

"Pretty! she is an angel! and I wonder you did not mention her to me!" I replied not, for I was again engrossed by my book. Soon after he exclaimed, "She will be wet, I am sure she will, and here is a storm coming, and she is at the end of the garden. What can I do?"

"Do!" said I. "Can't you go, as you have your great coat on, and take her up under your arm, and wrap her up in it, and bring her in?"

"Sdeath! Moreton, are you mad?" cried Lord D—— indignantly; and immediately rising, I ran to the window, where I must own that I saw, with more pain than pleasure, not a pretty child, but the most perfectly beautiful woman I ever beheld! She was dressed in mourning, nearly resembling that of a widow! but her glossy, waving, auburn hair, parted *a la Madonna*, relieved the exquisite white of her forehead, preventing the usual unbecomingness of a widow's costume. Her cheek was pale; but her complexion was so transparent, that the least emotion, or movement, crimsoned every part of it. Her eyes were hazel, large, and almost fierce in their expression—her features faultless in their formation—and her person, tall and well proportioned, though thin to a fault, was in every respect worthy of her face, and gave to her whole appearance a dignity and a beauty which I never saw before, nor have ever seen since in woman. To be sure I did not, on my first survey, see

all I have above described ! but I had no sooner beheld her, than, aware of Lord D——'s admiration of beauty, and that the heart is never so susceptible as after recent affliction. I felt an involuntary fear that this lovely incognita would captivate him ; for, with the conviction of her beauty, came over my mind, at the same time, a distaste to her expression of countenance ; and an apprehension that she was ill calculated to make up to my beloved patron the loss of his admirable wife.

While I was contemplating her as *fixedly*, though not as delightedly, as my friend had done, Lord D—— left the room, seized an umbrella ; and running to meet the lady, who was leaning on the arm of a short, thick, odd-looking waiting-maid, he reached her just as the shower fell, and had the satisfaction of conveying her safe from the rain to the house. I had gone to the hall door to wait for them, that I might have a nearer survey of her beauty, and I set down my poor patron as a lost man, when I saw the graceful sweetness and lady-like self-possession with which she thanked him for his attention, and listened to the soft and winning accents of her voice. Then, taking the arm of her servant, she withdrew to her own apartment, and Lord D——, with a deep sigh, returned to ours. "Aye—it is all over with him, poor man !" said I to myself ; and piqued, provoked and alarmed, I began reading aloud such parts of Horace as reflected on women ; and though I had not read, or thought of the passage since I was a boy at school and had acted Castalio, I caught myself several times during the evening repeating his celebrated speech—

"Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!"

Nor did I read without thundering out very impressively—

"—————deceitful woman,  
To the first tempter lewdly she inclined  
Her soul, and for an apple damn'd mankind!"

But I really believe Lord D—— neither heard my Horace nor my Otway ; for he sat in a sort of abstracted



silence, which alarmed me for the danger of his heart more than any loud praise of the beautiful incognita would have done. At length, however, he said, "Moreton, who can that woman be? Her air and carriage bespeak her to be somebody of distinction; let us inquire concerning her of the waiter, And he was accordingly summoned. But all he knew of her was, that she had arrived there the day before us, on her way, like ourselves, to Lisbon, that she never stirred out, never saw any one, and received no letters; that they did not know her name; and that the Welch girl whom she had brought with her scarcely spoke English enough to be intelligible. He also added, that she seemed very unhappy, and frequently was heard to pass half the night in walking up and down her apartment.

"Very mysterious, and very odd!" observed I, when the man had withdrawn.

"Not at all," answered Lord D—— with quickness—"She is evidently a widow, in delicate health and probably reduced circumstances, going to Lisbon for change air; and having recently lost a beloved husband, she is naturally enough wretched in mind, and can't sleep. I have often walked half the night, Moreton."

Now what my friend said was very just. Still I felt a great desire to contradict it; but I was ashamed, and remained silent, and soon after we parted for the night. The next morning when I rose, the first objects that met my eyes were the lady and her maid, and Lord D——, walking together in the garden; and as they were too much engrossed in conversation to see me, I busied myself in studying the countenance of this most lovely of women. I found my prejudice against her increase rather than diminish. My medical profession had given me some of that physiognomical, or rather pathognomical knowledge which distinguishes medical men. Indications of insanity are certainly discoverable to them, when unseen by others, from their habit of acute observation; and though I saw no marks of derangement about this unknown beauty, I discovered, in the quick motion and

perturbed expression of her eye, symptoms of alarm, suspicion, and disquiet, which told me all was not at peace within, and that she had something to conceal. But I saw that her beauty had so completely dazzled Lord D——, that he was quite unconscious her countenance was not one to dwell upon with confidence and pleasure; and I hurried down stairs, from a silly feeling as if my presence would be a sort of protection to him from the dangers that assailed him.

“How do you do today, Moreton?” said Lord D—— with more vivacity than he had lately exhibited; and before I could even get in a “How do you do, my lord?” he continued; “This, madam, is the kind and tried friend I was mentioning to you, who has promised never to forsake me, but share my fate whatever it may be.”

“Happy you, sir, in possessing such a friend!” replied the lady with a faint smile. She might have called Lord D—— “Sir,” even though she was apprized of his rank, still I felt an irresistible desire to let her know his rank, though of my real motives I am not certain.

I have often ridiculed in others the fondness for showing their intimacy with and knowledge of great people. Still, as I have almost always observed that those who are most ready to laugh at this weakness in others, infallibly fall into it themselves whenever they have an opportunity, I am by no means sure that one of my motives for calling my friend by his title as soon as I could, was not the wish of impressing her with an idea of my importance in having a lord for my friend. But whatever was the cause, it is certain that I very soon made an opportunity of saying “My lord, will your lordship—” and as I did so, I have no doubt but that I looked at the incognita, with an expression which seemed to say, “There! do you hear that?—You are talking thus familiarly with a lord!” I am the more confirmed in this suspicion by the look which she gave me in return; for while

“That eye dropt sense distinct and clear  
As any muse’s tongue could speak,”

it seemed to say,—“ Well, and what then? I have seen a lord before,—aye, and think it no such marvellous fine thing to be the friend of one;” and I felt the blood rush into my face, as a sort of half smile as if in contempt played on her beautiful lip. This was the beginning of those dialogues of looks which this lady and myself from that hour to the last of our acquaintance very frequently held; and when I thus do justice to the powers of her expression, I flatter myself that my readers will believe I was not deficient in similar powers, though I might perhaps be called notwithstanding a very ugly fellow.

But to return to more important matters. These meetings in the garden took place daily; and though nothing could be more proper, or more guarded, than the lady's behaviour, I saw that she evinced every day more and more satisfaction whenever my Lord Delborough first accosted her; still her look seemed the result of a restless, unhappy, and undecided mind; and as I could not help surveying her with very scrutinizing looks, I saw that she was often embarrassed by the steadiness of my observation. But the intercourse was at length not confined to the garden;—Lord Delborough offered to lend her books; and the offer being accepted, he carried them himself to her room, and was rewarded by an invitation to walk in. But she kept her maid in the room then, and did the same in future when my friend visited her alone, though when he was accompanied by me the servant was dismissed.

Thus did we pass six weeks, and they passed rapidly to my *friend*, but slowly to *me*, because I wished, what I persisted to think a dangerous intercourse, to be put a stop to by our voyage. However, we had acquired some necessary information during that time; for we had learnt both the maiden and married name of our incognita. One day Lord Delborough said playfully, but evidently with a view to give her an opportunity of naming herself, “ I have always forgotten to present my friend properly to you, madam, and he has never done me the favor of presenting me. But ‘ better late than never.’

This, madam, is Mr Moreton, formerly Dr Moreton, a learned physician; but as doctor is not a good travelling title, in future he is only Mr Moreton, at your service.—” “And give me leave, madam,” said I, “to present to you the viscount D—— of——Hall, in Rutlandshire, and Portmansquare, in London.”

“But who is to present me to *you*, gentlemen?” replied the lady, blushing deeply, and forcing a smile, though an expression of great distress was visible in her countenance; then recovering herself as rapidly as she could, for she saw that even Lord D—— seemed to think a mutual disclosure of names necessary, she assumed an air of dignity, and replied, “I was born a St Clair, and I married a Macdonald,” and as she spoke her national pride of birth flushed deeply o’er her face, and, sprung as she from ‘The lordly line of high St Clair,’ I saw clearly why, at the sound of my friend’s rank, she had turned on me a look of such calm and scornful disregard. “Yes,” she continued, “my maiden name was Rosabel St Clair;” and, seeing that I regarded her with a scrutinizing look which she probably mistook for a look of suspicion, she fixed her eyes on me, and said, “those who know any thing of the pedigree of my family, must know that Rosabel is one of the family names of the St Clairs; but I am the last of my branch of that noble family. I was always an only child, and I was soon an orphan; and when Colonel Macdonald made me his wife, I stood alone in creation, without near tie of any kind. But he,” she added, clasping her hands together in agony, “he made up to me for the loss of every other tie. He was my all, my pride, and for some years my *blessing!* ’Till—— I lost ——” here, too much affected to proceed, she retired into her chamber, leaving my poor friend, who sympathized only too deeply in her affliction, as much affected as herself.

It was some time before she returned to us, but as soon as she did she addressed us thus; “It is so painful to me to recall what I have been, and to contrast it with what I **am**, that I shall disclose as much of my situation as it is

right for you to know, to convince you that you have not bestowed your attentions on an unworthy object, and then finally drop the subject. When the great misfortune of my life took place, I resolved to quit England for ever, and try by change of scene to divert my mind from images of past happiness which destroyed my peace. I had no paternal fortune; but when my calamities occurred, I found myself possessed of a clear five thousand pounds, and on that sum I knew I could live decently in a foreign country; and I also knew that my mind, accustomed to depend on itself, and capable of being acted upon by new scenes and interests, would gradually recover its tone when removed from its scene of suffering, and that life might once more become interesting to me. At present, however," she continued in a tone of deep dejection, and absolute despondence, "time has done nothing for me yet, nor entire change of scene, because I am still in Britain; but I trust that when I am once settled on some part of the continent, I may become more calm, else death in any shape almost were welcome!"

Lord D——, excessively agitated, could only reply to this mournful address, by broken sentences of sorrow, pity, regret, interest, attachment, esteem, and so forth; but I did not think of making any answer at all, being wholly absorbed in wonder at that almost stern independence of character, as it appeared to me, which had led this young and unprotected woman to disregard the soothing and support of her friends, and to launch out on the world of another country, like a female adventurer seeking as it were her fortune. But *had* she friends? *was* the question. Had she *deserved* friends? Nor could I behold without a feeling of dismay, the total want of religious comfort or dependence which her language evinced. Not once had she adverted to the necessity of resignation to the divine will, and the comfort which the deepest sorrow derived from that resignation; but she appeared in ever thing a self poised being, wrestling with only mortal strength against the anguish which fate had inflicted, and proudly resolved to prove victorious in the combat.

But my infatuated friend saw nothing in her character to counteract the effects of her beauty, and her evident wretchedness only made his benevolent heart yearn towards her more fondly, till the earnest wish to be her consoler, and her husband, became triumphant over every other consideration ; and I soon discovered that it was Mrs Macdonald's mourning habit alone which delayed the offer of his hand and heart. How did I congratulate myself that I was not so vulnerable to the power of beauty, nor even to the more lasting attraction of intellect and manner ! Else, I too might have loved this fascinating woman, and tasted the agonies of a hopeless attachment— But I was never for a moment in danger. The peculiar expression of her countenance had always rendered me suspicious, and the evident haughtiness of her disposition had from the first repelled me. Nor had her mind, though powerful, any charm for my taste or my judgment ; for, though superior, it was not sufficiently so to satisfy either. Like the traveller who has ascended high enough up the side of a lofty mountain to be enveloped in clouds, but not high enough to see them roll away beneath him ; so Mrs Macdonald was sufficiently elevated in understanding above her sex to think she might despise those restraints, those rules of decorum, and those usages of society, which regulate the actions of inferior women, but not wise enough to feel the necessity, the gracefulness, and the benevolent utility of submitting to such restraints. She felt, in her imagined power of self government, that her innocence and purity, fortified by strength of intellect, did not need the protecting aid of the customary forms of society to guard them from attack. But she did not feel, that as such forms are necessary for the preservation of women exposed by their weakness to danger, it is the more incumbent on those who are raised in intellect above other women, to submit to the salutary restraints of decorum, lest they lead their less-gifted sisters into danger by the seductions of their example. In short, her talents were bright enough to shed an uncertain and lightning brilliancy in her path, calculated to mislead rather than direct ;

but their brilliance was not strong enough to shine with steady, *noon day* radiance, and light her with safety and certainty on her way.

It may be thought surprising, and even impossible that I could discern so easily the defects in this lady's character, and see so evidently the marks in her of some mysterious sorrow, some probably guilty secret, while Lord D—— remained perfectly unconscious of both. To this I reply, that Lord D—— was a man wholly devoid of suspicion, and not gifted with much penetration. He was, on the contrary, even blind to the faults of those he loved ; and, being wholly free from guile himself, was never apt to suspect it in others. He was

“ So pure, so good, he scarce could guess at sin,  
“ But thought the world without like that within.”

Besides, he was in love, and love cast its own beautiful hue over all that he beheld. As the effect of a Claude Lorraine glass sheds one equal and beautifying tint over every landscape and every cloud, giving warmth to coldness, and clothing barren scenes in beauty ; so love made every quality in this charming woman assume a charm and appear a virtue in the eyes of her lover ; it gave the semblance of tender regret to the gloom of conscious duplicity, and dignified the impetuous inequality of her temper with the name of quick sensibility, and proper self respect.

Whatever were *my* ideas relative to this *mysterious woman*, as she appeared to me, I soon found that they were confined to myself alone, and that Lord D——'s confidence in her was equal to his admiration. At the end of six weeks the wind changed, to the joy of us all. But when we were on the point of being summoned on board, Mrs Macdonald became so ill that she was forced to keep her room, and *our* voyage was consequently abandoned ; for Lord D—— declared he was bound by powerful ties not to leave this friendless stranger behind in a sick bed ; and I was forced to acquiesce, though reluctantly, in the justice of the sentiment. But I soon found that honor

itself forbade my friend to leave Falmouth under such circumstances, as he owned to me that he had recently made an offer of his hand to the interesting widow ; and that the excessive agitation which his proposal had occasioned, had been followed so closely by her severe indisposition, that he was not only obliged, as a man of honor, to wait to receive her *answer* to his declarations, but his anxiety on account of her illness was increased by the fear of having caused it. At length she recovered, and we were again admitted to her presence ; but it was some days before she was sufficiently well to admit Lord D—— to address her again on the subject nearest his heart. At length, however, as he himself informed me, she told him with considerable emotion, that though she was afraid she should never be happy herself, she was willing to do all in her power, to administer to his happiness, conscious as she was, that, if she had any affections left, after all she had endured, those affections would be his, and would lead her to study his comfort in every thing. “ My Lord,” added she, “ I am so gratified, and my heart is so touched by the devoted, confiding attachment which you have shown me, that I swear to you, were you my inferior, and a beggar, I would have consented to be yours. So sweet is it to be loved, and so particularly soothing to the torn heart, which having once been fondly beloved, has been doomed to mourn over the cessation of its blessings.” When my friend related these assurances to me I did not entirely believe in them, though he did ; but I have since been led to place implicit reliance on their truth, and to admit that what she thus expressed she most thoroughly felt.

The morning after this conversation, she sent for us both into her apartment, and with an expression of countenance in which my friend saw only the confusion of modesty and emotion, but in which I read the perturbation of a conscious and oppressed mind, she told us, that though she saw with pleasure that Lord D——’s confidence in her was such as to make him satisfied with what she had narrated to him of her story, still, for the satis-



faction of his friends, (and here she turned on me a most meaning glance,) she had resolved to put it in his power to gain more information relative to her. She therefore, pointing to the table, on which were materials for writing, begged Lord D—— to write down what she dictated, and the result was the following letter enclosed to Messrs M—— & Co. Bankers, Lombard-street, London. And directed to Mrs M—— the wife of one of the parties.

Madam,

You would greatly oblige a person much interested in the inquiry, by informing me in a letter, addressed to A. B. Post-office, Falmouth, what you know or think of Mrs Macdonald, the widow of Colonel Macdonald, who, when you last heard of her, was, you know, on the point of quitting England. Is her character equal to her appearance? and does she deserve the esteem which her *conduct*, and manners, seem so powerfully to challenge?

I am, Madam, your obedient humble servant,

A. B.

“There is no necessity, none in the world, for an application of this nature,” observed Lord D——, “and the testimony of this lady can only confirm all I already think.”

“But Mr Moreton looks,” replied Mrs Macdonald, “as if he approved of the application.”

“I should do so,” answered I gravely, “if it were made in a proper way; for why should not Lord D—— write in his own name?”

“Because, if I am not what I seem, Mrs M—— would be more likely to write openly, and ingenuously to A. B. than to Lord D——.”

“O! certainly, certainly!” interrupted Lord D——, “nothing can be more honorable and delicate than your motives—and I will hear no objections made, but seal and send the letter directly.”

I therefore, on hearing this, saw it would be fruitless to say any more on the subject; though I felt assured, that a woman who really wished to establish her identity, and had the means of doing it in a satisfactory manner,

would have set about the task in a very different manner; and instead of giving one reference, would have given many, and not have dictated an anonymous letter to any one. However, my opinion was of no importance, and the letter was sent, and *answered* by return of post. It was as follows;

Sir,

Your letter gave me pleasure, though from a writer unknown, because it afforded me an opportunity of speaking of Mrs Macdonald in the terms which she *deserves*. Sir, her virtues, and her talents, are equal to her beauty, and though not happy, no one ever deserved happiness more; but she is only too much wedded to the memory of a very bad, unfaithful husband, whose sudden death ought to have been a source of rejoicing to *her*, as well as to her friends.

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

A. M.

Lord D——'s delight, on perusing this letter, could only be exceeded by Mrs Macdonald's trepidation on its delivery; and when, having read it herself, she gave it with a look of triumph, to me, her face became of a hue resembling death itself. When I came to the part relative to the sudden death of Colonel Macdonald, I involuntarily exclaimed, "*sudden* death! I did not understand the death was sudden." "Sudden!" exclaimed Mrs Macdonald, echoing my word—Sudden! O aye, so it was sudden;" and holding her hand to her head, she left the room.

Reader, though well convinced that a suspicious is an unamiable temper, I must honestly confess that, at this moment, a suspicion of a most horrible nature took possession of my mind, while my more generous patron remained as confiding as before, and saw, in the strong emotion of Mrs Macdonald, nothing but a very natural distress at hearing the sudden death of her husband alluded to. But then he was in love and I not; and a man who chooses a wife under the delusions of passion, appears to *me* to be no more a rational judge of the results

of his actions, than a man who enlists for a soldier when in a state of intoxication. From this *unfortunate* moment I entertained a horror of my patron's approaching union, and I was forced to quit the room abruptly, when I heard that as soon as the two years mourning of Mrs Macdonald had expired, she would become the wife of Lord D—.

We were soon after summoned on board, as the wind was again favorable; and after a short passage we found ourselves in Portugal. To be brief; my friend was united to Mrs Macdonald very soon after we reached Lisbon, by an English Clergyman, chaplain to the factory there. I, with a heavy heart, witnessed the ceremony; nor could I behold without the greatest pain the excessive agitation, and the coldness almost amounting to aversion, which every speaking look of the trembling bride evinced. Yet if ever there was a man formed to inspire love, and possessed of every qualification to retain it when once inspired, such a man was Lord D—. His face and person were of the first order of manly beauty, and in temper and attainments of various kinds, I never knew his equal; yet it seemed to me, that the woman to whom he was about to confide his honor and his happiness gave him her hand almost with loathing and terror, and seemed to consider herself as a devoted victim rather than a happy bride. But the bridegroom wholly blinded by passion, saw nothing but the proper modesty of the sex in the behavior of that unaccountable being; and his happiness was as great as my anxiety. I hate national prejudices, and it has always been the study of my life to conquer mine; but now in spite of myself, my old aversion to the Scotch nation returned, and I thought of Catherine Nairn, who was privy to the murder of her husband, till I felt my prejudices against Scotch women get ahead of me with frightful strength—And the new Lady D— was born a St Clair, and married to a Macdonald! and her first husband had *died suddenly!* He had also been an unfaithful and bad husband, and his death ought to have been a relief to her, it seemed! Yet she was not only wretched beyond any hope, she said,

of ever being happy again, but had *evidently* a weight upon her mind; a weight that *sorrow only* could not create! It cannot be supposed that, as these suspicions were uppermost in my mind, they did not show themselves on my countenance; and I soon perceived that Lady D—— observed and understood the character of the looks I gave her; and that she watched me as much as I watched her. It at length occurred to me, that I would try to find out whether Mrs M——, the banker's wife, was a respectable woman, and her testimony worthy credit. Accordingly I wrote to a friend in London, to inquire concerning her, without naming my patron's marriage, because to say the truth I was *ashamed* of it, and I received an answer which satisfied my mind in some measure; for it stated that Mrs M—— was one of the best and first of women, and so rigid in her ideas, that no woman, but of the most unblemished character could be honored with her friendship and countenance. This was much, certainly, in Lady D——'s favor; and a few days after I received this letter, I said "Has not your ladyship written to Mrs M——, your friend, to announce your marriage?"

"No, sir," she replied with great vehemence and indignation, but in great confusion also, "I have not written, nor shall I write."

"No? dearest Rosabel! and why not!" asked Lord D——.

"Because I do not feel any friendly disposition towards Mrs M——. She has always spoken disrespectfully of my poor husband; and I ask you, Lord D——, if *you* could ever have treated and considered as a friend the person who had spoken irreverently and unjustly of the wife whom you regretted?"

"O! certainly not," replied Lord D——, "I enter into the feeling—and do not any longer wonder at your silence."

I said nothing, but I believe I looked a great deal; for Lady D——'s eyes regarded me with peculiar fierceness. What she had said might be fine sentiment

and delicate feeling, but I thought it contrary both to gratitude and justice: for, if Mrs M—— resented as a friend Colonel Macintosh's ill usage of his wife, that wife ought at least to feel grateful for the severity of animadversion which, however erroneous, had its origin in kindness towards her: and I thought that she was bound in justice and proper feeling to impart to Mrs M—— the good fortune which had befallen her. I did not, however, utter what I thought: but I could not help saying — "And have you written, madam, neither to friends nor relations to announce your change of situation?"

"I have told you before, sir," she replied very politely, — "that I have no relations except distant branches of the St Clairs, who perhaps never heard of me; and as to my friends, all recollection of, and all connexion with, my native country is so painful to me, that I wish to be as one who exists not, to all who have ever known me; and most truly can I now say," looking with seducing tenderness on her husband, — "that this room contains the whole world to me, and here all my wishes centre."

The woman who spoke thus was young and beautiful beyond the power of description, and the man to whom she spoke was young also, an idolater of beauty, and of feelings the most impassioned and affectionate. It was impossible, therefore, for him not to think all his bride uttered or did, was "wisest, virtuouslest, discreetest, best;" and the delusion he was under seemed to render him so happy, that I sighed almost with envy, while I felt how impossible it was for me to be so deluded. Yet still it was to me inconceivable that Lord D—— did not feel wonder, if nothing more, at Lady D——'s neither writing nor receiving letters of any kind; but he had no suspicions, and it was not my duty to give him even a hint of mine.

After travelling some time, it was resolved that we should take up our residence for several months at Lausanne, and thence proceed to Marseilles.

While we were at Lausanne, Lady D—— was prevailed upon to mix occasionally in the society there; but

not, I observed, till she had fully ascertained the names of those whom she was either to meet or to receive. In these societies, which consisted of the natives and a few English families long residents at Lausanne, and foreigners of all nations, she laid herself out to please, and succeeded to her utmost wishes; not that her manner for an instant bordered on levity, or that she forgot the usual dignity which distinguished her; but she conversed much and generally, and on a variety of topics; though I remarked that she was more popular among the men than the women; as the latter, spite of her complaisance, were not slow to discover, as self-love has great quickness of discernment, that she felt them to be her inferiors in the scale of creation; and that with the other sex only could she converse on equal terms. She was sometimes also prevailed upon to join parties on the lake; and when she did so, many boats were in the habit of following ours, in order to catch some of the fine and touching tones which, when the lake was still, this highly gifted woman condescended to breathe forth. In singing the plaintive airs of her country, she was in my opinion unrivalled; and the appropriate expression which she threw into her face, while singing, added greatly to the effect of her voice.

But these water parties were suddenly put a stop to, and our departure from Lausanne hastened by the following circumstance:

We were rowing along the lake one day, in a party consisting of about eight persons, besides ourselves, and Lady D——, who usually wore a veil, was that evening without one, as she had dropped in the water the one she had worn when she left the house, while entering the boat, and had therefore given it to one of the servants in attendance to be carried home again. She was this evening unusually animated; when suddenly I saw her countenance change, and her hand applied to her hat in order to pull down her veil; but finding she sought it in vain, she hastily applied her handkerchief to her face; and, as I followed the direction of her eyes, I saw them fixed on a boat which had just passed us *a larame*, and in which was a young lady singing.

“Who are those?” said Lord D—— to a Swiss gentleman. “A family, I believe,” he replied, “just come from Scotland; and with them is a Miss Buchanan, who is at this moment singing, and sings I am told like an angel,—that is almost as well as Lady D——.”

“Indeed!” cried Lord D—— smiling, “I wish I could hear her. I should like to hear a lady who sings almost as well as lady D——; and as they are resting on their oars, our rowers may easily overtake them.”

“Not for the world,” exclaimed Lady D——; “pray let us turn about instantly, and make for the shore as fast as possible, for I am sure that dark cloud over our head is full of mischief.”

“Oh, no, of nothing but a little harmless rain, against which we are prepared.”

“You may think so, my Lord; but I am of a different opinion. I believe we shall have a tempest, and I am so alarmed, so nervous, that I must insist on returning directly.”

Lord D—— did indeed read such alarm in his wife’s countenance, that he gave orders for tacking about immediately, and they were obeyed; while the rest of the company, not being so candid as he was, did not, I am convinced by their looks, attribute, as he did, Lady D——’s wish to return home to apprehensive nervousness, but to the dread of her hearing singing as fine if not finer than her own. But I imputed different motives to her conduct; and when she turned a look of anxious inquiry on me, I saw that she read in my eyes the anxious suspicions which I felt.

While we were turning round, the black cloud grew darker and darker, and Lord D—— insisted on Lady D——’s wrapping a boat cloak round her; and as she did so, she dropped her handkerchief into the lake, which was instantly carried off by a wave, and irrecoverable almost as soon as lost.

“What shall I do? I have lost my handkerchief!” cried Lady D—— in a tone of dismay. “Lend me yours, my dear Lord, to hold to my face, in case, as I feel pain there, of a return of such as I felt just now.”

Lord D—— felt for his handkerchief directly ; but recollected that he had left it on the shore, while assisting his lady into the boat.

“Provoking !” muttered Lady D—— ; and as her eye met mine, a blush of confusion passed over her pale cheek.

At this moment we were turned towards the land, and we beheld two ladies and a gentleman, the former of which were standing on the shore dressed in plaid ribbons.

“See, Rosabel, the colors of your country !” cried Lord D——.

“Is Lady D—— a Scotch woman ?” cried the Swiss gentleman. “Then she would like to know her countrywomen, for those ladies are part of the Scotch family in the boat ; and as we must land near them, I shall beg leave to present them to her ladyship.”

As he said this I turned my eyes on Lady D——, and saw her sink pale as death on the shoulder of her lord. I concluded therefore that she knew the moment of detection and discovery was now arrived ; and that, whatever her story was, a meeting with these ladies would disclose it. Wherefore then was I not eager to expedite this moment ? and why did I shrink from a scene that I had so long desired ? for I *did* shrink from it, and I trembled with apprehension equal to that of the unfortunate Rosabel. No doubt my predominant feeling was a dread of my patron’s happiness being destroyed by the discovery ; but I suspect that pity, and a sort of unconscious interest which I felt in her fate, made me thus averse to what I had before desired ; and while she lay nearly fainting on Lord D——’s arm, with her face hidden on his shoulder, I was contriving how I could skreen her from the observation of those to whom her evident indisposition made an introduction, when we landed, entirely improper. In the meanwhile the boat rapidly advanced towards the land, and the strangers were evidently awaiting its approach. Nothing, thought I, can now save her from a public exposure, but a miracle ; and an involuntary “Gracious Heaven !” escaped me. It roused Lady D—— from



her mournful stupor ; and raising her head ; she cast on me I thought an appealing look, and a look of such wo ! I felt it deeply ; and approaching her I said, “ Dear lady I wish I did not see you thus.”

At this moment the dark cloud discharged itself in torrents of rain, and the curious strangers were forced to run hastily away to seek shelter ; and for the present I felt that Lady D—— was saved from what she dreaded. I therefore turned round to her with an expression, I believe, of great exultation in my countenance ; for while in her’s I read equal pleasure and triumph, I also saw in it a look of grateful kindness towards myself. The strangers had now entirely disappeared ; therefore, as we had reached the shore, Lady D—— felt herself secure, and declared that her faintness was entirely at an end.

“ I never suspected your ladyship of being a coward,” said one of the gentlemen ; “ I thought you left such feminine weakness to inferior women.”

“ No one is always equally firm in mind and nerve,” she replied, blushing deeply, ashamed of being forced to feign the weakness which she felt not ; for Lady D—— I well knew had no apprehensions of any kind, and I echoed the deep sigh which she heaved for her own degradation. But her danger was nearer than ever ; for, as we came in sight of a sort of shed on our way, we saw the strangers at the door of it, while the Swiss gentleman exclaimed, “ There they are, Lady D—— ; there are your countrywomen !” I immediately said, “ Lady D—— is still too unwell to have them presented to her, sir ;” while she, scarcely conscious what she did, laid hold of my arm, and, stopping as if to take breath, turned her back on the shed.

“ O that I had but a pocket-handkerchief,” she exclaimed, “ to hold to this aching face of mine !”

“ Lend her yours, Moreton,” said Lord D——. It was impossible ; for mine was begrimed with snuff.

“ How unfortunate ! Yet what a ridiculous distress,” returned Lord D——, “ that in all this company I am sure there is not a handkerchief proper to be lent to a lady, as they are all snuff-takers !”

Lord D—— smiled with his usual expression of internal peace as he said this!

“Alas!” thought I, “he may soon learn never to smile again perhaps;” for I saw that, unless we could conceal Lady D——’s face, something unpleasant if not terrible must occur. Lady D——’s back was at this moment towards me, and the train of her gown, which was muslin, got loose and fell on the ground. A lucky thought struck me. I took it up, and, throwing it over her head, exclaimed, “There, my Lady, this will keep your ribbons from the rain, and will also serve to wrap in folds about your face, instead of a handkerchief.”

“It will indeed! a thousand thanks to you!” she replied in a faltering voice; and instantly turning round, secure from being recognised through the thick folds of the muslin, she declared herself able to proceed, and she passed fearlessly before the searching eyes of the *nouveaux arrives*; who evidently had heard of her beauty, and were eager, especially the gentlemen of the party, to be presented to her by their Swiss acquaintance. But he had taken my hints, and did not offer to present any of them at so unpropitious a moment. I found that one of the ladies was the eldest sister of the Miss Buchanan who was singing in the boat, and I was certain that to these ladies Lady D—— was personally known.

When we reached our home, Lady D—— retired immediately to her own room, pleading indisposition as an excuse; and as she gave me her hand while she bade me good night, I thought she pressed it kindly, while tears stood in her beautiful eyes. But the next day she resumed her usually distant manner; and though she knew that I had discovered she had a secret, and understood the nature of her distress of the preceding day, she set me again at defiance, and would not place any confidence in me. With this consciousness returned my wish to discover her secret; and I was therefore much provoked, when, on pretence that the air of Lausanne disagreed with her, she bound Lord D—— to set off the next day towards Marseilles, thereby making a meet-

ing with the Scotch ladies impossible. At Marseilles we were joined by the heir-at-law to my patron's titles and estates in case he died without children. Lord D——, during the first paroxysms of his grief for the loss of his wife and son, had assured this youth that he should never marry again, but consider him as his child. It was therefore probably some mortification to find his cousin married when he arrived at Marseilles. However, as yet, Lady D—— did not seem likely to have a family, and she paid such attention to this youth, and took such pains to win his good will, that he was not only quite reconciled to his own disappointment before he left us, but was almost in love with the cause of it. But almost as soon as he was gone, Lord D——, with infinite delight, drew from his wife a reluctant confession that he was likely to be a father; and I must declare that on this occasion I most cordially sympathized in his happiness. But, strange to say, Lady D——, so far from sharing in our joy, seemed overwhelmed with grief by the conviction that she was likely to be a mother, and her impatience under the illness incident to her situation could not be sufficiently accounted for by the usual fretfulness of disease. On the contrary, it bore the strongest marks of misery and bitter regret.

During the first months of her pregnancy she declined going out entirely; and as I insisted on Lord D——'s taking exercise, because I was convinced that it was requisite for his health, I was necessarily the companion of his lady, who, though I was sure she did not like me, preferred even my society to being left to the misery of her own thoughts. Sometimes indeed, closely muffled up, she went with us to the theatre; but she always sat in *une loge grillee*; and, as at Paris and in other large places, she always screened herself from the view as much as possible. And considering that her beauty, wherever she allowed it to be seen, excited even loud testimonies of admiration, and that *la belle Anglaise* was followed as soon as beheld, it must be surmised that personal vanity was not amongst her weaknesses, or, if it

were, that it was conquered by some passion more powerful still. It is also a very decisive proof of the pure and true love Lord D—— bore her, that, satisfied with possessing her and her affection, he did not want the gratification to his pride of displaying his treasure to the world. But, with the exception of the evenings which he passed at the theatre, we were commonly at home alone; and I, as I before said, had frequent opportunities of conversing tête-à-tête with Lady D——. I found her competent to converse on various subjects, and eager, by involving herself and me in an argument, to lose her sense of suffering in the excitements of disputation. But on some subjects we agreed; subjects too on which my suspicious nature had led me occasionally to expect she would agree with me faintly, and with evident confusion of manner. Amongst other topics, I one day started that of remarkable trials; and I had *nerve* enough to ask her if she had ever read the trial of her countrywoman Catherine Nairn for the murder of her husband. With great quickness, and an unembarrassed smile, she replied, "I shall, in return, ask you whether you ever read the trial of *your* countrywoman, Mary Blandy, and for murder also, even the murder of her father; for crimes are not confined to countries, my dear sir, but free citizens of the world."

"Granted," I answered; and I assure you I meant no national reflection when I mentioned Catherine Nairn as your Ladyship's countrywoman; but I think there is stronger evidence of the guilt of the one than of the other."

"I agree with you," she calmly replied, "for I have never been able to convince myself that Miss Blandy thought the powders she administered were poison. But of Catherine Nairn's guilt there could be no doubt; and who can wonder that a woman capable of such aggravated and shameless adultery should not scruple to add to it the crime of *murder*? I have always considered all the crimes, as near relations, and very apt to assemble in family parties."

"True," answered I; "and such adultery as this was

likely to end in the worst species of murder, that, long premeditated,—and not the result of impetuous passion, and sudden impulse. Yet after all," added I, "whether murder be premeditated or only sudden, it is nevertheless murder, and a very great crime, even if that most powerful of passions, jealousy excited to it."

As I said this, I fixed my eyes steadily on Lady D——, and I saw her cheek turn deadly pale, and a sort of convulsive motion agitate her upper lip. For a minute she was silent; but recovering herself, she said in a hoarse voice, "If any thing can palliate the crime of murder, it must be jealousy, for that is of all feelings the most powerful and the most accursed; and let not those who have never experienced its influence, presume to censure the unhappy being who, in a moment of frantic jealousy, attempts the life of the offender. Nor let them dare, like the pharisee of old, secure in *untempted* innocence, to thank God that they are not like this erring fellow creature." So saying, with a countenance stern yet sorrowful, she darted on me a look of haughty defiance, and slowly and majestically left the room, leaving me more bewildered and certainly more *suspicious* than ever. And *yet*, had this evidently unhappy woman been conscious of having in any way, and from sudden impulse, hastened her husband's death, her emotion when she spoke as above would have been infinitely greater. Still I saw that on this subject of murder from sudden impulse she was *vulnerable*, and I knew not what to think.

By this time she had become as great an object of interest to me as to Lord D——, though it was interest of a totally different sort; and the acuteness of her observation soon led her to feel the extent of the interest which she excited in me. She was always, I observed, conscious of my motives, when I started particular topics, with a view, as Hamlet said of his tragedy, "to catch her conscience." Sometimes I fancied she might have committed felony or forgery; and then I mentioned shoplifting as being sometimes practised by ladies, and that I had heard of ladies who were forced to leave their

country because they had forged notes to a considerable amount.

"Very possibly," she replied with a look of calm contempt; "there is no calculating on the probable obliquity of human nature."

On the subject of female chastity she was equally unperturbed; and though professing not to like Dr Johnson on account of his illiberal prejudices against her country, she spoke in high terms of his opinion on that old and hackneyed subject; and she added, "As happiness is 'our being's end and aim,' I think that, setting aside the restraints of religion and morality, a woman who yields her honor to the dictates of passion mistakes her object, if happiness be that object; for, even supposing that her lover be constant and affectionate, she has to bear up against the world's 'dread scorn,' and utter rejection by her own sex—a consciousness under which no woman can ~~find~~ <sup>find</sup> comfort and peace of mind. Therefore, a woman who expects to be happy while suffering under the results of a state of guilt, is like an indigent man who gives great entertainments, and forgets that the day of payment for them must come, a day for which he is wholly unprepared and unprovided."

To this I could only reply in terms of acquiescence and approbation; and though I am far from thinking that blushes or confusion, when such a subject was started, would have been proofs of conscious incontinence in her or any woman, because the conviction of being *suspected* would alone have been sufficient to excite this emotion; I am well convinced that no woman who was not conscious of innocence could have talked so calmly, so fully, and with such apparent satisfaction, on the subject in question.

But we did not always agree so well, nor was she always as gentle in her mode of arguing. One evening the conversation happening to turn on the subject of the laws respecting women, she contended that for the rights of women there was not a sufficient protection in any code of laws.

“Our Scotch laws, however,” said she, “in one respect are very indulgent to us, and are properly regardful of our rights and injuries; I allude to the power granted a Scotch woman, or even a woman resident in Scotland, to divorce her husband for infidelity.”

“I am not quite aware,” said I, “that this is a wise and good law; and——”

“So, sir!” interrupted Lady D—— with a countenance of flame, “I suppose you are one of those beings who expect in the weaker sex, as you think proper to call us, that command of our passions which you deem it a merit in yourselves neither to have nor to *affect*; and while you dare to divorce us for one error, however excused by your base conduct, it is your odious selfish maxim,

‘That man, the lawless libertine, may rove  
Free and unquestion’d through the wilds of love.’”

“Madam,” replied I, a little confounded at her vehemence, “I am no advocate for profligacy either in man or woman; but I can quote the great authority which you yourself applied so well on the subject of female chastity, in support of my own opinion, that if a man does not insult his wife, she would be to blame to resent very highly an occasional error of this kind in an otherwise good and affectionate husband.”

“Sir,” returned Lady D——, every fibre of her frame trembling with strong emotion, “this is one among the many instances of gross contradiction in morals that disgraces that illiberal writer, sir; so far am I from agreeing with you and him on this subject,” (and as she said this, she rose from her seat, stretching her fine throat to the utmost, while she regarded me with eyes of fire, that seemed as if they would have annihilated me if they could,) “Sir, I solemnly assure you, that I should think myself as entirely divorced from my husband by even one act of infidelity on his part, as if a legal act of separation between us had taken place.”

“My dearest love,” cried Lord D—— smiling, but terrified and amazed at her emotion, “what necessity is there for you to hold out so formidable a threat to *me*? There is very little chance of my ever incurring this severe penalty; for I am by nature constant; and till I meet with your superior in beauty and every other attraction, a most hopeless expectation, there is no danger of my being an unfaithful husband.”

During this speech, emotions of the most violent kind seemed to agitate her whole frame; and when it was ended, she turned on him a look of the most mournful but touching tenderness; then stretching out her hand towards him she fell in a deep swoon into his extended arms. It was some time before she recovered her senses perfectly; and when she did, she was so ill that I insisted on having further medical advice. And the gentlemen whom we called in assured Lord D——, that any agitation would in all probability occasion a premature confinement, if such an accident were not on the point of happening already. Nothing could exceed the agony with which Lord D—— listened to this possible downfall of his hopes, except the calmness and apparent indifference with which his wife heard it; nay, it seemed to me that her countenance expressed *pleasure*, rather than pain. “Strange, inexplicable woman!” thought I; “and can a creature of your strong affections rejoice in the probability of having your prospect of being a mother destroyed?” But our fears proved false; and in due time Lady D——, to the great joy of her lord, was delivered of a son.

Whatever Lady D——’s feelings were before her confinement, it is very certain that maternal tenderness at first beamed in her expressive face, and lighted up her beautiful eyes, when she gazed upon her lovely boy and received him to her maternal bosom. But I perceived after she had been a few weeks a mother, that her pleasure in her infant seemed to subside; and that while she looked on him a deep gloom gathered over her countenance, while sometimes she would clasp him to her breast



with energy, as if her very being depended upon him, and the next she shrunk from him as if his birth and his existence were a disgrace and a curse to her. In short, derangement alone could, I thought, account for the strangeness of her manner towards this lovely child. But she had no other symptoms of derangement, and I was more and more bewildered in my conjectures respecting her, when the poor infant, who had excited in me this new train of thought, was seized with convulsions, and I had soon no hope of his life. To this hour, I cannot recall without the most painful emotion the strange undefinable and unaccountable struggles of mind and feeling exhibited by this mysterious woman. Her agonies, while she beheld the sufferings of her child, were such as the most flinty heart could not behold unmoved. Still her regret seemed to subside with his apparent pangs, and the idea that he must ultimately die, appeared to occasion her very little anguish. Just before the poor infant breathed its last on the lap of its mother, who had held it through all its struggles with exemplary firmness, spite of the most evident agony, I forced Lord D——, whose grief was terrible to behold, out of the room; and I returned unseen by Lady D——, who had sent the nurse away on some errand, just as the child ceased to exist, and the shuddering mother was convinced that she held a corpse in her arms. Never shall I forget the expression with which she gazed on it; but satisfaction was evidently the sole feeling uppermost at length; and I heard her, before she discovered me, exclaim, "Yes, its death is a blessing, not a curse; and I rejoice, for to rejoice in it is my duty." On seeing me she started, and was evidently shocked and alarmed at discovering by my countenance of wonder and inquiry that I had overheard her words; but with infinite readiness she said, "Yes, to rejoice in every dispensation of Providence is our duty, and to believe that what he thinks proper to deprive us of, would have been a curse rather than a blessing."

This, had I considered her as a pious woman, I might have received as the *real* interpretation of her words;

but as I had always in vain looked for in her that steady faith, that consoling piety, and that restraining sense of religion, which at once call forth, support, and reward virtue, especially in women, I could only consider her words as meant to mislead me, and to conceal from me those feelings which I certainly was wholly unable to comprehend. She soon saw, by my looks and manner, that she had degraded herself in vain by this exhibition of artifice, and she hastened from me in search of her afflicted lord as soon as the nurse had taken from her the body of the infant, on whose lips she imprinted a long long kiss, heaving a sigh as she did so, which, though not perhaps occasioned by regret for its loss, was indeed the sigh of misery unbounded.

From this moment Lady D——'s manner towards me changed, and she became kind and conciliating; and when Lord D——'s grief for the loss of the child, in which she seemed to sympathize, had in a degree subsided, and he was disposed to go out as usual, she contrived to disarm me of the watchful suspicion with which I looked at and listened to her, by a seeming inclination to confide that disgust to me which she saw she could not conceal; and she every now and then insinuated with a deep sigh how much she wished to have a faithful, soothing, and safe friend, in whose honor she could repose that confidence which consideration for his peace forbade her to repose in her husband; and flattered by the attention she now paid me, and her seeming to regard me as a man worthy of her confidence, I lost my usual attentive watchfulness, and became only solicitous to convince her that in me she had a sincere, trusty, and zealous friend.

Though she always persisted in wearing a deep thick veil, she was now no longer averse to take walks on some of the best promenades about Marseilles; and sometimes she condescended to walk attended only by me. One day, as she was leaning on my arm, and walking with me in an unfrequented street, I observed a very beautiful effect of light on the sails of a vessel seen at a distance in the port of Marseilles; and as at the corner of the street

she threw up her veil to enable her to see it more distinctly, a gentleman turned suddenly upon us, whom I knew by his dress and appearance to be an Englishman. At sight of Lady D——, he started back with an exclamation of alarm and surprise, and at sight of him she drew down her veil, and fled with precipitation down the first turning which would, she knew, lead her home the nearest way; while he as swiftly followed her. Thinking the moment was come to clear up all the mysteries that appertained to this *extraordinary* woman, I prepared to follow the gentleman; but not observing, in my haste, a post which a man was carrying on his shoulder, I knocked my head against it with such violence, that it stretched me insensible on the earth; and when I recovered I found myself in a shop, and a man and woman chafing my temples, while Lady D—— and the gentleman had both disappeared. As soon as I was recovered, or even before, I set off on my way home, and found that Lady D—— had been returned some time. “Did her ladyship return alone?” said I. “Yes,” was the reply; and my lady seemed much agitated, for she had been frightened in the street.”

“So! that is the turn she means to give the business, is it?” said I to myself. “Well, we shall see how she contrives.”

“So Moreton,” said Lord D——, coming into the parlor with his lady, “I find Rosabel has little confidence in your strength or courage, as she chose to trust to her feet, rather than your arm to defend her from a madman!”

“A madman! Was the gentleman, at sight of whom your lady fled so precipitately, a madman? I saw they knew each other, but I did not read his malady in his face.”

“No, very likely not,” replied Lady D—— in a hurried manner, and forcing a laugh—“but it was a gentleman whom I have known many years, and who in his derangement, always persecuted me with his addresses; and the surprise of seeing him at Marseilles, even though

protected by you, had such an effect on me, that, as usual, terror urged me to fly, and I fled the faster because I saw that he pursued me. But till I lost sight of him by taking a sudden turn that led hither, I hoped every minute to hear or see you pursuing us both and I wondered at your want of gallantry."

I then explained why I could not pursue them! and I saw satisfaction beam in her whole countenance, at the assurance my relation gave her that I had not seen or conversed with the gentleman. But I resolved to go out the next day, and never rest till I had found this man, mad or not mad. I was therefore excessively provoked, when I found that we were going to set off in less than an hour on the road to Nice, our departure having been hastened by the terror which Lady D—— had expressed (real terror I did not doubt) of meeting this madman, as she called him, again. But my reluctance could not avail; nor dared I express it, lest its cause should be suspected; and in an hour we actually left Marseilles.

Thus were the means of gratifying a very laudable and natural curiosity snatched from me, just as chance had thrown it in my way. I however consoled myself with the idea, that if I had made any discovery to the prejudice of this mysterious wife, I should have found myself in a most painful predicament; for if I concealed the circumstance from my noble friend I should have been guilty of breach of faith; and if I revealed it, I should have destroyed his happiness. Still my restless curiosity remained unsatisfied, and on the watch; nor could Lady D——'s continued hints of meaning to confide in me, impose on or satisfy me any longer; because, in the first place, I was sure she had something on her mind which she *dared* not disclose; and in the next, I no longer wished to know what I could not, yet ought to disclose to her lord.

Not long after we had taken up our residence at Nice, we one day found Lady D—— in a situation which alarmed us all exceedingly. One of the servants on entering the room found her lying on the floor in a swoon,

and covered with blood. Her shrieks summoned me, and on raising her, I found that the blood proceeded from her mouth, and was evidently occasioned by her having broken a blood-vessel; while her distorted features wore the marks of excessive agitation. On the table by her lay an old English newspaper, in which some articles from England, which had lately come over, had been wrapped up. This paper Lady D—— seemed to have crushed together with a sort of convulsive grasp; but whether from intention, or not, I could not decide. When she recovered her senses, her perceptions did not at first return; but as soon as consciousness was entirely restored, the expression of despair and woe was imprinted on her countenance. I observed her eye turn with quickness and apprehension on the newspaper, which she suddenly seized, smoothed, doubled, and put in her pocket; and I regretted my folly in not making myself master of it, as I had already suspected it was the probable cause of her illness. The loss of blood had been so great, and I thought the bleeding so likely to come on again, that I insisted on her not speaking, but allowing herself to be conveyed slowly and carefully to bed on my arms and that of her attendants; while I congratulated myself that my poor friend was absent, and could not return till she was in bed, and the horrible evidences of her malady removed; for never did man more fondly dote on woman than he on her; and, but for her occasional violence, her want in my eyes of feminine qualities, and the mystery that enveloped her, I could then have said that never was woman more worthy to be doted upon; for she was generous, affectionate, pure-minded, and, as I always believed, irreproachably chaste in every point of view; and I could not but fancy that *one* single *error* had involved her in the necessity of pursuing a train of deception, which her lofty soul despised itself for having had recourse to. When she was in bed, and I was going to leave her to her servants, she laid her languid hand on my arm; and as she saw by my manner that I thought her case an alarming one, she breathed out, even with an ex-

pression of delight in her eyes, "Do you think I shall die, Mr Moreton?"

"I hope, I trust, not, dear madam, for my poor friend's sake," I replied in a voice hoarse with emotion.

"But not for *my own*. I thank you; it is kind," she answered, "for I have indeed lived long enough;" then waving her hand for me to depart, she saved me the pain and the difficulty of replying.

Lord D——'s fortitude entirely forsook him, as I expected it would do, when he heard what had happened, and I thought it my duty to prepare him for the worst; not that I concluded she was in any immediate danger, but the transparency of her complexion, and other circumstances, had led me to believe that breaking a blood-vessel must be to her an accident of a very serious nature; and as I had no doubt but that emotion had occasioned this first rupture; emotion, to which she was only too subject, would be very likely to bring on the bleeding again. But she recovered from the effects of this accident much sooner, and much more thoroughly, than I expected; for there was now, to my observant eyes, a degree of quiet sorrow, of settled despair, unlike her former restlessness, which was favorable to her complaint. Still, strange to say, my deceived friend saw nothing of this, but attributed the touching languor of her voice, manner, and countenance, to disease alone, and those recollected sorrows which, she had always told him, she should retain the marks and the remembrance of even in the bosom of happiness. But as soon as she was seized with these dangerous symptoms, I thought it proper that her own maid should always sleep in her apartment; and when she was recovered she insisted that this arrangement should remain unchanged.

Some months had now elapsed, and, reclined chiefly on a sofa, Lady D—— was as able as ever to listen to us, while we read, or even to converse nearly as well as usual, when we were informed of the arrival of a Scotch family at Nice, and Lord D—— was invited to meet them at the house of a gentleman whom he knew; and

as he was sure I would remain with Lady D——, he did not scruple to say he would accept the invitation.

I observed Lady D——'s countenance change when her lord said he was going to meet a Scotch family. However, she remained silent and his lordship departed. During the rest of the day she was frequently very absent and uneasy, and when we heard my friend's voice on the stairs she became agitated. He entered, evidently in high spirits, and as if pleased with his visit. "My dearest Rosabel," said he, kissing her cold hand, "I have passed as pleasant a day as I can pass absent from you, and, would you believe it? with——" Here Lady D——, interrupting him, begged he would remove the candles to another part of the room, as the light hurt her eyes; then throwing a veil over her face, she allowed him to resume the thread of his discourse. "Yes, Rosabel, would you believe it? I have actually been in company with a Macdonald—A Colonel Macdonald of Dunkeld—and perhaps a relation of yours by marriage. I told him across the table, I had had the honor to marry a Macdonald; and hoped we were relations. He bowed, and said he hoped so too, but that Macdonald was so common a name he dared not flatter himself it was so. Was I right, Rosabel? Were the Macdonalds of Dunkeld relations of your husband?"

"No, no," answered Lady D—— with such effort that I feared she was going to be ill.

"However," continued my friend, "whether your relation or not, he is a very pleasing man, and the more interesting to me from his having lost his wife, a very beautiful woman, and under strong suspicion, I believe, of her having committed suicide."

"Well!" exclaimed Lady D—— in a most uncommon tone of voice, and starting from her recumbent posture,—“Well, and does this interesting widower affect great regret for her loss, that your kind heart was so touched in his favor?"

"Yes. It is a blow, I find, which he has never recovered. So his sister says, a very interesting woman,

who has lived with him ever since his misfortune, and whose society is his only consolation."

"His sister! are you *sure* she is his sister?"

"There can be no doubt of it; for he is a man of honor, and he has introduced her as such."

"O my dear lord, you think every man as honorable as you are, you are

'Polite, as all your life in courts had been,  
Yet good, as tho' the world you'd never seen.'

And while her lord gallantly and affectionately thanked her for this compliment to his virtues and his manners, she rose from her seat, and with more animation and power than I had lately seen in her, walked across the room with her accustomed dignity, leaning on Lord D——'s arm, while her eyes beamed with a sort of unnatural brightness, and her cheek was flushed also with unnatural beauty.

"My dear lady," said I, "I fear you had better sit down again." And before she could reply to me her countenance changed, she burst into a violent flood of tears, and was glad to be conveyed to her bed as fast as possible. A day or two after, Lord D——, seeing she was quite recovered, told her that he would now own he had promised to meet the Macdonalds again at his friend's house; Mrs Douglas, the sister of Macdonald, having promised to tell them after dinner, when her brother had an engagement abroad, the whole of his melancholy story; "a story," added Lord D——, "which I am very anxious to hear; for it is, I understand, very romantic and strange, and very affecting; and indeed the uncommonly fine person and manners of Colonel Macdonald make him very fit for a *heros de roman*."

"Not more," she angrily replied, "than *you* are, *my lord*; for it seems you substitute sentiment for *sensibility*, and had rather listen to a whining and perhaps false tale of romantic distress, than stay by the sick couch of a suffering wife."

Lord D—— on hearing this looked like one bereft of



reason, while a "Gracious Heaven! what injustice! I could not have believed it," burst from my lips. Lady D—— saw she had gone too far; and with tears in her eyes she besought her lord, in whose bosom tenderness was struggling with very just resentment, to forgive her ungrateful petulance, and to attribute it to the peevish exacting temper created by disease heightened a little in this case by the suggestions of jealousy.

"Of jealousy!" we both exclaimed, he with surprise, and I with incredulity.

"Yes," she replied, blushing, and casting her eyes down to avoid my searching glance—"Yes—*jealousy*—for is there not a Mrs Douglas, a very *interesting sister*?" And while Lord D——, deceived and flattered by this avowal of a feeling which she could not have, hung over her with assurances that there could be to him only one woman in the world, I darted on her a look of indignation, which must have convinced her I saw through the artifice, and despised it. Certain it is, she either *dared* not, or would not, oppose Lord D——'s keeping his engagement, and he left us at the appointed time.

O! could the young, the innocent, and the unwary have beheld, as I did, the agonies which this dear unhappy woman underwent during the absence of her lord, this child and victim of passion and of wrong principles of action, how forcibly would they have been deterred, by this awful, fearful example, from giving way to the influence of passion in any respect! and how completely would they have felt every inclination to blame swallowed up in pity for the sufferings they witnessed!

Several times during the course of the evening she asked me what o'clock it was.—"What! is it no *later*?" she exclaimed. And when, in answer to her question, I told her the hour at a later period, she wildly exclaimed, "don't tell me so, do not tell me the hour of his return is so near!" And though she said nothing, I saw in her at times the almost breathless agonies of suspense, and the mental struggles of justly founded apprehension. It was very clear that she did not put much restraint upon

herself, because she knew that I suspected all was not right; and also, perhaps, because she knew the moment of discovery was probably at hand; and also because she was tired of playing a part so foreign to her nature. At length we heard Lord D——'s carriage.

"There he is! there he is!" cried the half frantic Rosabel—"but perhaps he will not come hither—not come to see me now!" And as she said this, I hastened to meet him. I found him not quite well, and intending to take the warm bath before he came into his wife's apartment, lest his fatigued look should alarm her. But he inquired most tenderly concerning her, and desired me to say he would come to her as soon as he could; and with this message I returned to her.

"Then you are sure he meant to come, and means to come?" she asked me with an agitated look.

"Most surely; and he inquired after you most tenderly."

"All's well then," muttered she; "but I—I had rather not see my lord till tomorrow, for I am much exhausted, and wish to retire to rest." Accordingly she rung for her attendants, and I saw no more of her, neither did Lord D——, that night. The next morning Lady D—— sent us word that she was too unwell to be disturbed, and should try to sleep as long as she could, and we were not summoned to her dressing room till evening, and then almost all the light had been excluded on pretence of indisposition.

"How are you this evening?" said Lord D——, seating himself beside the couch.

"Better, much better, or I would not have received you."

"But do you think yourself well enough to hear the extraordinary recital I have to give?"

"I am sure I hope so," said I, "for my lord has had the cruelty to refuse to let me hear it till your ladyship does, in order to avoid the trouble of telling it twice."

"Yes, my dear lord," answered Lady D—— in a firm tone of voice, but to me indicative of the firmness of

desperate resolution. "Yes, I am able and willing to hear all you have to tell me, and Mr Moreton shall not be disappointed. But I will lie down completely, that, if the narrative should be affecting, I may be the better able to endure it."

"It was indeed affecting to me," observed Lord D——. "The commencement of it, indeed, I did not hear; for I was called out to speak to my man as Mrs Douglas was beginning to relate her brother's falling in love with a beauty, followed up no doubt by the birth, parentage, and education of the said beauty."

"Which detail you did not *hear* then?" asked Lady D——.

"No; but as they were immaterial, I did not require them, as I returned time enough to hear all the needful; for Mrs Douglas had only got to Colonel Macdonald's happiness, and his bringing her down in triumph to his house at Dunkeld. 'Her talents,' she said, 'were equal to her beauty and her manners; but there was one drawback on her character, namely, a great contempt for the usual restraints laid on her sex, and a great violence of temper, which when once roused deprived her of all self-government. For some years, however, the happiness of Mr and Mrs Macdonald knew no interruption. But a servant, who, as was afterwards discovered, had conceived a passion for her virtuous master, in a transport of double jealousy, namely, jealousy of her mistress and of another object in the neighborhood, contrived to infuse the poison of suspicion into the irritable mind of Mrs Macdonald, who thereby became informed of circumstances which were well calculated to excite suspicion in any wife.'"

"I would thank you, Mr Moreton," interrupted Lady D——, "to give me those drops." I obeyed, and my friend went on.

"'Now,' said Mrs Douglas with a faltering voice and blushing cheek, 'I must bring myself forward, and confess that to my fond folly my poor brother owes all his subsequent misfortunes, and the loss of his beloved wife.

I had won the affections of the younger son of Lord H——, and had given him mine in return ; but my lover, despairing of obtaining his father's consent, had prevailed on me to marry him privately and unknown to my own family as well as his. But so afraid was he of his father's displeasure, that he made me solemnly swear, whatever it cost me, never to disclose that I was a wife. The consequence of this rash promise was, that when my situation could no longer be concealed, and was disclosed to the eye of my brother, in the first transports of his rage, he upbraided me as a disgrace to my family ; but the next moment he kindly promised, on pretence of taking me a journey for the recovery of my health, to place me in some abode where I was wholly unknown, and where I could lie in unsuspected and undiscovered. He did so. But when on his marriage he went to live at the family seat, where he and I were both personally unknown, he caused me and my child to remove to a house on his estate. But unhappily for him, he could not prevail on himself to disclose the supposed frailty of his sister to his rigidly virtuous wife. Nor indeed did I wish he should. And thus did he, by violating one of the first duties of married people, never to have concealments from each other, lay the foundation of his subsequent misery.' ” Here a deep groan from Lady D—— interrupted the recital ; but after a few moments she desired Lord D—— to proceed.

“ ‘ This unhappy girl, it has since appeared, whom I mentioned before, had watched her master to my house, and had often seen him caressing my child, and often witnessed the great agitation in his manner and in mine ; for he was always entreating me to reveal the name of my seducer, as he thought him, and I as firmly persisted in denying his request. However, at last, unable to bear any longer, the imputation of guilt while conscious of innocence, I wrote to my husband, requesting leave to confide my marriage to my brother ; and, as his father was then very nearly at the point of death, I received from him permission to disclose our real situation to my

brother alone, and to remove from his heart the load on his honor which my supposed delinquency had placed on it. Meanwhile, during the time that I was awaiting an answer to my letter, the wretched girl had contrived by some means or other to gain the ear of a woman highly dignified, whom no one would have suspected of listening to the tales of a menial, and she had condescended to follow the servant's example, and dodge, as it is called, her husband to my cottage. She had done this, we now found, more than once. But one unfortunate morning, a morning which I should otherwise have blest, as it allowed me leave to tell my beloved brother that I was not unworthy of him, the deluded Mrs Macdonald, no longer mistress of her passions, approached the house, and opened the door just as I, now restored to my brother's love, was, for the first time since my supposed fall from virtue, received to his affectionate embrace. For the first time he was kissing me with the pure and repentant tenderness of a long estranged brother, and when his unhappy wife appeared we were locked in each other's arms! Dear, deceived, unhappy woman! I can well understand and feel for her agonies at that moment! But the sequel is horrible—Mrs Macdonald had scarcely beheld a scene so terrible to the feelings of an adoring wife, when she fled with precipitation from our sight; and from that hour to this we have never entirely ascertained her fate. We found, indeed, her cloak and one of her shoes on the bank of a rapid river, and feared it was only too probable that she precipitated herself into it. But though the river was repeatedly and entirely dragged, we never found the body. And as my brother could not be convinced that she had destroyed herself, he, after she had disappeared about two years, caused an advertisement to be put in all the papers, which if it met her eyes she must have understood, importing that if she would return to her afflicted husband, the circumstances now so suspicious would be entirely cleared up, and he who was now considered as guilty would be found as innocent as she her-

self was. But as no notice was taken of this advertisement, even my brother was at last convinced that his wife was no more, and that she had really perished in the river. And ever since we have been wanderers on the face of the earth, sometimes accompanied by my husband and my child; and sometimes leaving them at some place where the latter might pursue his education, I have travelled with my poor Ronald, from a feeling that it is right to do all to restore that happiness which I was the means of destroying. I have only to add that the servant was so shocked at the sudden disappearance of her mistress, that she fell on her knees and confessed that she it was who had rendered Mrs Macdonald jealous of my brother and his visits to the cottage, and therefore her unfortunate appearance at so fatal a moment was accounted for.' ”

“ Is not this a touching story, dearest Rosabel ? ” said Lord D——; “ I saw by the motion of your bosom that it affected you. And—— O God ! ” exclaimed Lord D——, “ Moreton, Moreton, come hither ! come hither ! she is cold, she is dead ! ”

Nearly as much appalled as himself I drew nigh, and found that Lady D—— had fainted, and, as I suspected, not without a cause. Her insensibility was indeed so long, that I began to fear she was gone for ever; but at length she revived, and came at once to a full sense and recollection of her situation. Never did I behold a countenance so subdued as hers now was; at first, she did not attempt to speak, but her look spoke volumes of unutterable anguish. At length, however, she seized the hand of her lord, and pressed it repeatedly to her heart and to her lips. There was something of such unwonted humility in this action, that I could not but feel for the deep sensation of self-reproach which it indicated; and though it did not surprise me, it quite bewildered Lord D——, and he tried to escape from a caress, which though it flattered him seemed rather to derogate from her, by taking her in his arms and imprinting a kiss on her pale cold lips! But this tender endearment she

forcibly resisted, and with great effort said, "My dear lord, let me beg you to leave me alone with your good friend and physician here—as I wish to impart to him the symptoms and feelings of which I am conscious."

"By all means," replied Lord D—; and I was left alone with the mysterious wife.

"I believe, my dear sir," said she, "that it is unnecessary for me to inform a man of your penetration who I am; are you not already aware of it?"

"I own," replied I, "that I have my suspicions—you are the lost Mrs Macdonald."

"You are right. I am that rash, ill-judging, guilty woman. But oh! tell me, I conjure you tell me, in what way I shall break to my much injured and unsuspecting lord the horrid truth. Will you undertake to prepare his mind, and to break it to him to night, preparatory to my having a complete explanation with him tomorrow?"

"Most assuredly I will."

"And now, dear sir, will you have the goodness to tell me all that Mrs Douglas said after she had come to the part in which she described that when I appeared at the door they were locked in each other's arms? for at that moment a sickness like that of death came over me, and I hoped that I should never revive to consciousness more."

I told her all that she required.

"I thank you, sir," she replied, "and now I wish to be left alone. You seem to wonder at my calmness; but be assured it proceeds only from my thorough conviction that I shall soon sleep the sleep of death, else I could not endure the consciousness of what I am."

How to answer her I knew not, for I felt that I could not wish her to live. She had by giving way to the passion of a moment wrecked the peace of two amiable men, the one my friend and benefactor, and I thought her death was the only reparation she could now make to either. But she softened my heart towards her the next minute by saying, "Believe me, dear sir, that though often pained and perplexed by the acuteness of your ob-

servations, I have always done you justice, and estimated as it deserved that attachment to Lord D——, which led you to be so suspicious of me, and so watchful of my looks and words. Oh! I have often regretted that before I accepted Lord D—— I did not confide my sad secret to you. If I had, instead of now being the most miserable, I might still have been one of the happiest of women, and restored to that husband whom I adored with almost idolatrous passion."

Nothing more was necessary than this appeal to my self-love (so weak was my nature, and perhaps so weak is human nature in general,) to melt my heart even to woman's weakness in behalf of this afflicted being; and instead of answering her, I burst into tears.

"Kind, compassionate friend!" she replied, "though these tears are consoling to me, I beg you to control your emotion. Remember you have a difficult task to go through, and do not incapacitate yourself to perform it with firmness. You had better leave me now, and prepare for your hard duty. But first," said she, "give me a composing draught; for I mean, if I can, to sleep to-night."

I did as she desired; and then with a very full heart I left her to herself, and went in search of my friend, who, in great agitation, was walking up and down the apartment. When I saw him I could not speak, and he concluded from my emotion that his beloved Rosabel was in imminant danger, and with frantic vehemence conjured me to tell him what he had to expect.

"Not what you fear, my dearest lord," replied I; "but I have much to say to you—much, that it will require all your fortitude to support."

"What mean you?" said he, turning very pale.

"Did you never," I continued, "see any thing mysterious in your adored Rosabel's history and manner? Did she never appear to you to have a weight on her mind?"

"Sometimes—"

"Did you never suspect that she had something to



conceal? and some strong but secret reason for avoiding being seen, and living as she has done in almost constant seclusion?

"Never, never; and to what does this strange preamble tend?"

In this way I endeavored to prepare his mind for what I had to communicate; but there is *no* preparation for great sorrows; and though I had been with Lord D— before when he had experienced severe calamity, I had never seen him suffer the agonies which he now did; for there is scarcely a pang so great as that which is inflicted by the conviction of the worthlessness of the being whom we have set up as a faultless object to worship; while that religion which had on former occasions supported Lord D— through all his trials, now made him suffer the more, from the certainty he experienced that the woman he adored had sinned against every religious restraint and every moral duty.

When it was again morning I prevailed on him to try to compose himself for the sake of his still idolized Rosabel, who had told me she should request to see him, that she might give him a full explanation of all that had passed. But the day was very far advanced before Rosabel, as I shall in future call her, was herself able to see *him*, though she admitted *me* to her bedside. However, she became more composed towards evening, and we were both summoned to her apartment. I will not attempt to describe the meeting; nor the expressions of agonized tenderness on his side, nor of unavailing penitence and regret on hers, but proceed to her narration, of which I shall however only give sufficient to account for much of the conduct I have described which appeared to me unaccountable.

"Though early an orphan," she began, "my parents had lived long enough to spoil me by improper indulgence; and a contempt for all restraint, and an utter aversion to control my temper in any one instance, were coeval nearly with my existence. As I grew up, my beauty became the theme of universal praise wherever I

was known ; but I must do myself the justice to say, that being conscious I had talents also, I had the wisdom to pride myself more on this latter possession, than on the perishable one of even consummate loveliness. But as I liked singularity, my mind unfortunately took a metaphysical turn, and I became deeply read in books not usually known to women ; the consequence of which was, that my natural pride and independence of spirit were increased by these fancied powers not usual to my sex ; and being convinced that women were in no respect inferior to men, I began to scorn the slavery in which I thought we were kept by the other sex, and to consider our rights equal, and our duties and virtues the same ; while, of all injustice and tyranny, I thought there was none so great as that imposed by the marriage laws as they now stand ; though, as I have before said, I honored my own country for its laws respecting divorce. It was necessary that I should tell you this, to account for my deep resentment of the supposed infidelity of the husband I doted upon, and for the instantaneous resolve which I made, and which *my* ideas of right principle made me adhere to, to quit forever the man who had thought himself privileged on account of his sex to commit an action which he would have punished with divorce in *me*. But I shrunk from divorcing him as I fancied I could do by a legal process, from feelings of wounded pride and wounded delicacy ; and after I had fled never to return, I still resolved to be contented with mere separation from him, and the consciousness that the idea of my suicide would amply revenge me on his affectionate and susceptible nature for the wrong he had done me. But I must go back to other times. I was only eighteen when I first saw Macdonald ; and if he became at once openly enamoured of me, I beheld him with equal though secret admiration. To be brief ; we were married, and for four years, though not blest with children, we were happiest of the happy. Friends I had none, for I liked not the company of women ; and till I fell in love I had always maintained that each person was sufficient to his or her

own support, and that a mind properly regulated and enlightened required no stay, no support whatever ; whether from friend or relation. But when I learnt to love, I felt that dependence on *one being* was sweeter far than all my boasted independence. In proportion, therefore, to my love and happiness became my deep resentment and my misery, when, in a moment of weakness, I degraded myself so far as to listen to the feigned sorrow and affected sense of duty of a treacherous menial, and learnt to believe this beloved husband a traitor to his vows. I knew that Macdonald earnestly desired children, and I had not borne him a child, but I was informed that this supposed mistress had an infant whom my husband often caressed with the greatest fondness ; and unused to conquer any of my feelings, and scorning to win back by patient tenderness the man who dared to wound both my pride and my affection, I resolved to steal upon him in his licentious privacy, regardless of consequences, regardless also in what way I might be induced to indulge my dreadful thirst of vengeance. You know already the result of my jealous visit ; and you will own that the sight of my husband clasping a young and beautiful woman, and his supposed mistress, in his arms, was sufficient to rouse a tempest of passion even in the breast of one habitually mild. But the kindness of Mrs Douglas concealed the action which was the bar to my ever thinking of returning, and which made me wish to be believed no more, but to have perished by my own hand. She did not tell you all ; the truth was, that maddened at what I saw, I seized a knife which unhappily lay on the window seat, and aimed it at the lady ; but unsuccessfully, as I saw it fall guiltless of offence at her feet. Immediately ashamed of the attempt at murder, as well as frantic from other causes, I fled with the speed of lightning over paths which I had hitherto thought inaccessible ; nay, winged and nerved by desperation, I sprung across a deep wet ditch, which was the boundary of the greatest part of Macdonald's grounds ; and before it could be thought possible that I had reached it, I had sought shelter in a cottage, where

there lived a poor woman to whom I had done great service ; and whom I prevailed upon by a piteous tale of my wrongs to conceal me till all search for me was over. I next prevailed on her to carry my mantle and one of my shoes to the banks of the river near our grounds ; and after being concealed by her a few days, I induced her to abandon her cottage and follow my fortunes. I should have been terribly distressed for money, had I not seen in the papers, the very day that this calamity happened, that a share of a ticket I had purchased in the lottery had come up a prize of 20,000*l.* entitling me thereby to 5000*l.* Luckily, as I *then* thought, I had this ticket in my purse, and money enough to frank my companion and myself to London, where I received my money for the ticket, and then proceeded to Wales. There I remained till my poor Janet died ; but then taking a Welch girl into my service, instead of her, I resolved to go abroad. For I could not, even in my moments of relenting tenderness towards my dear though offending husband, prevail on myself to go back into the presence of one who had seen me attempt the life of a fellow creature ; nor could I bear to appear a degraded being in the eyes of him to whom I had been an object hitherto of adoration ; neither could I prevail on myself to forgive what I *thought* the *unpardonable crime* of infidelity, and with a woman too, who happier far than I, had given him a child, that blessing for which he panted. All these considerations forbade with a voice of thunder my return to what I now feel was the path of duty ; and who that has once deviated from it, can be sure of not losing sight of it more widely still ? I had passed for a widow nearly two years, living in almost utter seclusion in Wales, when I resolved to go abroad and try if a change of scene would calm a mind which spite of its boasted independence, pined for a kindred mind, and felt, though too late, that the ties of friendship and of kindred are absolutely necessary to existence. It was at this moment, when I had repaired to Falmouth in order to go to Lisbon, that I met with you. And you can now understand all I must

have suffered, though you saw it not. But you, Mr Moreton, observed it all; and now my illness, my emotion, and my agitation at the altar, are accounted for; for though, on my own system, my husband's infidelity had divorced us, I knew that I was about to commit an illegal act, and that my children, if I had any, would be illegitimate. But I had had no child by Macdonald, and I hoped and trusted, my dear lord, I should not have any by you. The reasoning by which I convinced myself it was right to marry you, because I was become necessary to your peace, is so fallacious that I will not repeat it; suffice that I soon found it was impossible for a woman to be happy who was conscious of a secret like mine, and who knew that, if that secret was known, she should be the cause of misery to one of the best of men. But O! what agony did I not endure when I found I should be a mother, and deprive the lawful heir of his inheritance! Had my child lived, I had, however, resolved he never should inherit; for I meant to deposit my confession in some safe hands, to be given you in case of my death, and to be disclosed in case of yours."

"But how," interrupted I, "how did you procure that letter of lies from Mrs M——?"

"By deception, by a complete falsehood; for in so much necessary guilt does one wrong step involve us, that I, to whom falsehood was hitherto unknown, have been forced to plunge into the very depths of fraud. I knew that a distant cousin of mine, Rosabel St Clair, and esteemed a very handsome as well as amiable woman, had married a Colonel Macdonald, and had been an exemplary wife to a very bad husband. I also knew that this lady's intimate friend was Mrs M——, the banker's wife; I learnt from a friend of Mrs M——'s, whom I occasionally visited in Wales, that Mrs Macdonald had called on Mrs M—— to take leave of her before she went to Altona to nurse a brother of hers, who was detained there by bad health. I therefore thought I could without danger of detection obtain a seeming testimony to my conduct; which, though not necessary to confirm Lord

D——'s good opinion of me, was necessary I saw to allay *your* suspicions."

"But how came you not to change your name?"

"From that every feeling of honor shrunk. You will think that I am fantastical in my distinction, and that, having once resolved to deceive, I need not have scrupled at one deception more; but my feelings were against this falsehood, and I was always accustomed to be guided by *them*; besides, in this case, you see, this little instance of honesty was favorable to me, as it enabled me to procure testimonials to the virtue of a *Mrs Macdonald*."

"But was the gentleman you met a madman?"

"No; he was the near relation of my husband; and I felt an immediate conviction that the first words he would speak, if I stayed to hear them, would be something that would convince you my husband was alive; and I was never easy afterwards, for I was sure he would inform Macdonald that he had seen me; and I am convinced that nothing but my poor husband's constant change of abode can have prevented his having already received a letter to this effect."

"What was the newspaper that affected you so fatally?"

"An old English newspaper containing the advertisement which invited me back if yet alive, and protested the innocence of my husband. From that moment I resolved, if possible, to procure proofs of this boasted innocence, and, if I procured them, to quit you, my lord, though never to return to *him*; but it was necessary to my peace that I should consider this assurance as a mere lure to get me back again, and as such I at length learnt to consider it. The rest you already know; and I will not pain you and myself by dwelling on my misery, when I heard from lips very dear to me that Macdonald was in the town, and that Lord D—— had met him! a widower, lamenting a beloved wife! But I felt myself comforted and buoyed up again, when I considered that Mrs Douglas was no doubt the mistress for whom I had been abandoned, as I had never heard him mention having a

sister,—a silence which is now accounted for ; and it was this supporting resentment that made me rise from my couch with that delirious strength which ended, you may remember, almost as soon as it began ; I have now only to say further, that I earnestly desire to be released by death ; as I must be doomed during the rest of life to live a solitary being, though beloved by two of the best of men."

Here Lord D——, who had hitherto sat in perturbed but entire silence, hiding his face in his handkerchief, suddenly arose in violent agitation and left the room.

"For myself," said Rosabel, looking after him with looks of lamenting tenderness, "I feel nothing ; I have deserved my misery, and I must learn to bear it ; but for those dear ones whose peace I have destroyed, I feel anguish and pity unspeakable."

"Aye ;" and I almost wish," I replied, "that, as you still might have done, you had kept your sad secret, for my poor friend's sake."

"I could not do it ; that conscience, *always* my sole judge and my sole instigator, forbade me, when I knew Macdonald had never in my ideas ceased to be my husband, to live with that noble generous being, to whom I could then, only in my eyes be a mistress. I know," she said, "you will tell me I was only this before. But I thought differently ; and it is only by our own ideas of right and wrong that we can stand or fall."

"You are in this instance," answered I, "perfectly just and correct ; and it was only for my poor friend's sake that I wished you had not been so, for how will he bear the separation ?"

"Do you mean to let your existence and your story be known to Macdonald ?"

"Spare me," she exclaimed in great emotion, "spare me on this subject, for I am not yet able to talk on it. Remember, I loved, I *adored* my husband ; that the idea of his infidelity *maddened* me ; and that now, when unable to be reunited to him, I find he was always faithful, always affectionate, and that he is here lamenting me still, and wedded to my memory !"

“ You will see him then ? ”

“ I know not yet ; for O, Mr Moreton, think you,” she exclaimed, “ that *he* would consent to see *me* ? ”

Here she became so agitated, that a violent fit of coughing came on, which occasioned a most violent return of the bleeding at the lungs ; and when I had, after many hours of fruitless applications, succeeded in stopping it, her weakness was so great, and her other symptoms so formidable, that I saw a rapid decline awaited her ; and I thanked God that it was so ! for I knew that neither could my friend, as a virtuous honorable man, continue to live with another man’s wife when assured that she was so, nor could she consent to it as a virtuous woman, even if he desired it. Could she return to the husband whom she had injured, without a violation of every delicate feeling, even though he had been willing to receive her. Therefore death was to herself more desirable than life. The misery of my poor friend surpasses all my power to describe, for he could not help still doting with the most devoted fondness on a woman, whom his nice sense of moral rectitude obliged him to consider as unworthy, and whose whole conduct and character had been, he now saw, at variance with those sound principles of action, built on a firm and rational sense of religion, which he had been taught to regard as the only pledge of woman’s virtue, and the only security for a husband’s honor. Still, the idea of parting with her was insupportable ! But he was a little comforted, in spite of his benevolence, by the assurance I gave him that, if she lived, she *never* would return to Macdonald.

Indisposition of a most painful nature, and sufficient nearly to suspend the consciousness of mental suffering, now took possession of this unhappy woman ; and in a few days I was convinced that all was nearly over. She had hitherto, and evidently from a generous wish to give up indulging her own feelings at the expense of Lord D——’s, foreborne to mention her husband, or to express a desire of seeing him. But when assured by me that her last hour could not be very far distant, such a



tide of tenderness overflowed her heart at the thought of Macdonald, the husband of her early love, and the innocent sufferer under her rash and frantic desertion, that she earnestly entreated to be allowed to see him and implore his pardon ; nor could she listen, as I endeavored to make her listen, to the suggestions of generous pity towards him.

“Remember,” said I, “that knowing you alive, and finding you thus, will occasion all his old wounds to bleed afresh, and inflict new ones of a most deadly nature. No ; have the greatness of mind to make one effort to spare the man you have already afflicted, any more pangs, and let your self denial in death make atonement for your selfishness in life.”

She paused, she cast her eyes upwards as if in prayer, and after a long and deep struggle said, “You have *conquered* ; and may Macdonald never even *suspect* that I lived, and lived with another !”

This virtuous resolution completely overset me. I wept over her like a child, and I even reproached myself with cruelty in having exacted this sacrifice from her. But my exertions, and her compliance were rendered ineffectual by the scene passing below stairs. Colonel Macdonald had called to return Lord D——’s visit, and had entered the hall, not being able to summon any one to the door, just as my friend was passing from one room to another. Consequently they met ; and Lord D—— on seeing him started with a sort of convulsive agony, and rushing past him threw himself on a sofa. Colonel Macdonald had heard that Lady D—— was ill ; and being able to sympathize only too well with the afflicted husband, he followed him into the parlor, with eyes full of tears, and a cheek pale from sympathetic feeling.

“My dear lord,” said Macdonald, “let me conjure you——.”

At these words Lord D—— wildly imagining that Macdonald had discovered the secret, and came to claim his wife, started up and exclaimed,

“Sir, I know your rights, and do not mean to dispute

them ; but *death, sir, death* will snatch her from us both ; your Rosabel, and *my* Rosabel, is on the bed of *death, Macdonald !*”

“Your Rosabel ! and *mine !*” cried the latter grasping his arm.

“Yes ! do you not know that your long lost Rosabel is now Lady D——, my fancied wife ?”

“Villain !” cried Macdonald nearly choked with passion and amazement ; but at this moment *I* rushed in ; for one of the servants hearing the violence with which his lord spoke, came to me and told me what he had overheard. What the consequences would have been had I not entered I know not ; but I forcibly led Macdonald into another room, and by degrees unfolded the whole story to him. Alas ! it would have been heaven to him, to have been able to blame Lord D—— for having deprived him of his wife, compared to what he felt when forced to acknowledge that *his* conduct had been irreproachable, that all the guilt was on the side of Rosabel, and that her long estrangement from him had been entirely voluntary ! I was telling him that she had had sufficient consideration for his peace to resolve to let him remain ignorant of her existence, and to deny herself the pleasure of once more beholding him—when he eagerly interrupted me with—

“Pleasure ! Did she then *wish* to see me ? Does she love me then still ? O lead me to her, lead me to her this moment !” I must own that at this instant I thought more of my poor friend’s feelings than Macdonald’s, and I could not bear to let him see Rosabel unlicensed by him. But the impetuous tenderness of Macdonald could not be restrained. Rosabel, however, guilty, dying, penitent, and fondly desirous of seeing him, was an object which he could not be prevented from approaching ; besides, she was his wife, and he had a *right* to see her ; and while I struggled with him on the stairs, alarmed also for her safety from the surprise the sight of him would occasion her, his voice exclaiming, “She is my wife, and you shall *not* keep her from me !” reached the ear of Rosabel. Even

the faintest tone of that voice so fondly loved could yet vibrate to her heart, which had been faithful even amidst all its wanderings; and starting from the bed on which she was reclining, she would have tried to rush to the door, had not Macdonald suddenly stood before her. She gazed on him with such a look of delighted tenderness! such an expressive acknowledgment of the joy the sight of him coming in search of her occasioned her! then throwing herself into his opening arms, Macdonald received and unconsciously pressed to his affectionate heart, as a pale and breathless *corpse*, that Rosabel whom he had last parted with in all the loveliness of consummate beauty!

I shall not attempt to describe the extent of the distress either of my friend or of Colonel Macdonald when I assured them that she was gone for ever; but I must hazard an observation or two on the *duration* of their subsequent grief, which certainly was not in proportion to its *acuteness*; for it is an undoubted fact, that no woman, however beautiful, however intelligent, can be long regretted by her husband, unless fancy, while it recalls her charms, can at the same time dwell with complacency upon her virtues.

Lord D—— could not but remember that his adored Rosabel had deceived and betrayed him into a connexion with a married woman; and Colonel Macdonald, instead of regretting her with tender pity as the victim of love for him, and as a rash but interesting suicide from wounded and frantic affection, now recalled her to his memory as a being of such a perverted state of mind and feelings, as to have lived in conscious adultery with another man.

I am also happy to state, that cured of his former attachment to her memory, he sought and found consolation in a second union.

I had moreover the satisfaction of seeing my beloved friend as happy, at last, as his virtues deserved.

We returned to England, after a residence abroad of three years, by way of *Altona*, where I by accident became acquainted with that Mrs Macdonald whom the wretched Ro-

sabel had made the means of accomplishing her deception on us, and I interested her not a little in Lord D——'s fate by telling her the story of her erring relative. But I well knew that her name, and certain associations with it, would make Lord D—— averse to be acquainted with, or even to see her ; and I confess I was anxious to make known to him that *exemplary wife*, and *well-principled widow*, who had borne her husband's faults, while living, with dignified, silent forbearance and affectionate indulgence, and had even extended her forgiving tenderness so far, as to screen his *memory* from reproach.

One day we met her in the streets of Altona, and being struck with admiration of her beauty, he asked who she was.

"It is Mrs Macdonald," replied I ; and, as I expected, Lord D—— shuddered and passed rapidly on ; but when he got to some distance, he turned his head round and looked after her.

We met her again the next day, and I found that he was struck with the family resemblance which she bore her cousin ; for I heard him say "How like !" as he turned away while I stopped to speak to Mrs Macdonald.

"I wish you would let me present you to her," I ventured to say. But he eagerly replied, "By no means, it would be too painful to me." I did not urge the subject further ; for I knew that Mrs Macdonald was to sail with us in the same packet for England, and that therefore an introduction must sooner or later take place. I was right in my expectations ; and as Lord D—— was seized with a severe illness as soon as we embarked, Mrs Macdonald's knowledge of those little services and attentions so soothing and welcome to invalids made her a most valuable acquisition to us ; and though she did not give Lord D—— any personal attendance, I took care to let him know the comforts he received were of her preparing and providing. Nor was it long before I heard him ask me, after he had been sitting up in order to give her his thanks in person, if I was not struck with her likeness to one very dear to him.

"To be sure," I replied, "and I recollect that they were distant cousins."

"You mistake me," he eagerly answered, deeply blushing; "I meant that she is like my wife, my dear Emily!" O how my heart bounded with joy to hear this! as I knew that, whenever women or men begin to see, or to fancy that they see, a resemblance to their first wedded companion, they are excusing to themselves a wish, only scarcely known as yet perhaps to their own hearts, of making the supposed resemblance the successor to the resembled.

To be brief; Mrs Macdonald, without I believe seeing in Lord D—— any resemblance to *her* husband, consented to marry him as soon as he requested her to do so, and their union was a happy one.

*Her* name was Rosabel Janet; but by the former name she was, for obvious reasons, never called after she married Lord D——; and all recollections of the unfortunate Rosabel, her namesake, we banished as much as possible.

At the moment that I write this, Lord and Lady D—— are looking forward with great joy to the union of their only child Miss H——, with the only son of Lord D——'s heir at law, mentioned in the beginning of these memoirs.

These memoirs themselves I have written with a view to their being published when I, and those to whom the publication might recall unpleasant feelings, shall be removed from mental consciousness,—and——

Here the manuscript breaks off abruptly; but I have given it to the world as it is, and I shall leave my readers to draw their own moral from the story, a story which, as was stated in the first page of it, though certainly 'le vrai' is not the varisemblable.

## APPEARANCE IS AGAINST HER.

---

“WHAT shall we do?” said a rich banker, a very busy and zealous politician in the city of W——, to a gentleman of considerable importance who lived in the neighborhood; “Parliament is dissolved, the writ is expected down every day, and we have not yet found a candidate to oppose our unpopular member; therefore he will be returned again, merely for want of some one to set up against him.”

“Why not stand yourself?” replied Sir James.

“Why do you not follow the advice you give?”

“I would, if my health would allow of it. But let us not waste these precious moments; let us endeavor to find some one likely to suit our purpose. Ha! fortunate indeed! I see a very proper person yonder.”

“Whom do you mean, Sir James? that young officer?”

“Yes—Colonel Vane.”

“Is that the Colonel Vane who distinguished himself on the continent so much by his personal bravery when quite a youth; and who made himself adored the other day, even by the rioters against whom he was called to act, by the mercy with which he tempered justice?”

“The very same. He is come hither on a visit to Captain Clinton, who is recruiting here; and as he is a man of independent fortune, and is moreover a well-known and popular character, I think, if he would come forward, he might have a chance of succeeding.”

“Then, as you know him, Sir James, suppose you ask him to offer himself?”

"With all my heart," he replied; and accordingly they went in pursuit of Colonel Vane.

"Is it possible, gentlemen," said Colonel Vane, when their wishes were made known to him, "that you can be serious in this application?"

"Quite serious," sir, replied Mr Linwood. "The truth is, we are in great want of a proper person to oppose to one of our present members whom we earnestly wish to turn out."

"And you think *me* a proper person?"

"Certainly,—a gallant officer, a well-known and popular character, and a man of independent fortune."

"Mr Alton our present member, does the business of our city very ill, and—" "Excuse my interrupting you, sir,—but surely it would be better to have the business of your city done *ill*, than not done at all; and a man in my profession is liable to be sent abroad, and to be unable to do any of his parliamentary business."

"Very just," returned Mr Linwood, "but we want to get Mr Alton out at all events; his political principles are obnoxious to us, and——"

"So then, sir, it is not his neglect of business, but his *politics* that have made you his enemy; you have quitted your original ground, sir,—and pray, what do you know of *my* politics? I can assure you that not even the certainty of displeasing my constituents for ever would induce me to give a vote, or utter a sentiment, contrary to my conscience."

"No doubt, sir, no doubt,—a perfectly honest man, I dare say, and we ask nothing more."

"But it seems, sir, that your present member Mr Alton is equally honest, as he has ventured to put forth and act on opinions hostile to yours."

Mr Linwood, who, like most violent politicians, was as much actuated by his personal dislikes as his political principles in his exertions on such occasions, was not quite ready with an answer to this observation from the Colonel, when two shopkeepers, near whose doors they were standing, came out, and, addressing Mr Linwood, begged to know if an opposition was expected.

"Certainly, certainly," replied Mr Linwood, "there will be an opposition, and we hope to prevail on this gentleman to stand. But don't let us stay here,—let us walk into Mr Dodd's shop, as I see some voters sitting in it;" and Colonel Vane had the complaisance to follow him. Mr Linwood immediately began a long panegyric on the virtues of Colonel Vane, in which he was seconded by Sir James; and when he had ended, he begged the Colonel would say a few words for himself.

"You have said so many," replied he, "and of such a nature, that my modesty is so overcome, I am of necessity silent; but I suppose you wish to have a specimen of my canvassing powers; Therefore I shall say, Gentlemen, if I stand candidate for this ancient and honorable city, I hope you will give me your votes."

The persons to whom he spoke one and all assured him that their votes were already promised to the old members in case of an opposition; and Colonel Vane bowed, and was retiring; but Mr Linwood, catching his arm to detain him, began to expostulate, and was requesting them to "think better of it," when Colonel Vane rather indignantly exclaimed, "Sir, did not you hear the gentlemen say that they had *promised* their votes already?"

"Yes, sir, yes; but promises and pie-crust, as the saying is, are made to be broken, you know; and I dare say your eloquence would prevail on them to break theirs.—Do try."

"Never, sir, never. What! make a proposal to others which I should resent as a personal insult if made to myself?"

Mr Linwood looked angry and disconcerted—and Sir James saying, "I see you are untractable, and will make a wretched canvasser," quitted the spot; while one of the voters addressed Colonel Vane with "God bless you, sir,—I see you are quite a gentleman, and I am sorry I cannot vote for you."

Colonel Vane replied by a very graceful bow, and followed Sir James, accompanied by Mr Linwood.



"I hope, sir, you are now convinced that I am more likely to mar than further your wishes?" said Colonel Vane smiling; on which Mr Linwood, coldly saying he must certainly seek a candidate elsewhere, bowed and took his leave, no longer prejudiced in favor of this popular and well known character."

But different was the effect which the dialogue, such as it was, had had on a very attentive though unseen listener. The mistress of the house into which the Colonel and his companions had entered, had been lady's maid to a young and beautiful orphan heiress, who resided near the town; and this lady having called to inquire concerning the sick child of her quondam servant, had seated herself in the parlor behind the shop, and was kindly endeavoring, in the temporary absence of the mother, to get the infant to sleep on her lap, when the gentleman entered and began their canvass. The door was open, and she was placed behind it; but though unseen herself she had a full view of Colonel Vane, who was well known to her by reputation, and she not only heard his name announced, but every word that he uttered,—words which derived new power from an expression of countenance finer in her eyes than any that she had yet beheld; "and this is the man," thought Miss Mordaunt, "whom I have so long wished to see! this the gallant soldier, the humane commander, the pious son, the generous brother, so often the theme of praise amongst those whose praise is honor!" and she sat lost in reverie, after the object of it had vanished from her sight; when the mistress of the house entered the room, roused her to recollection, and, taking from her her sleeping charge, left her at liberty to depart. She was taking her leave, when she saw Colonel Vane and Sir James slowly walk past the door, which was on the fashionable parade for gentlemen, and she knew that, if they returned again, she must meet them on her way to a house where she had left the lady who lived with her as a companion. Immediately a feeling of flutter and bashfulness came over the usually unembarrassed Ella; and doubting the

propriety of being seen alone on a sort of public walk, though it could be only for a *moment*, she almost resolved to watch her opportunity, and steal out when the Colonel and Sir James were gone by. But other feelings prevented this; and pulling her veil in full folds about her face, she sallied forth, casting a timid look of inquiry round.

The gentlemen in question were at a little distance from her, but stopping to speak to Mr Linwood, who had again joined them; and as Ella drew near, she saw that Colonel Vane was earnestly looking at her, and could not doubt but that the whisper he was addressing to Sir James Morritt was an inquiry who she was. In an instant her usual bloom was several shades deeper than before, her motion became embarrassed, and she made a passing curtsy to the baronet, without that easy grace which usually distinguished her.

It was unfortunate for Ella that Sir James and Mr Linwood were at that moment the companions of Colonel Vane; as Mr Linwood disliked her because she had always repressed the advances of his pert and forward sons, and Sir James was one of her rejected admirers. It was not likely therefore that Colonel Vane would hear her named with much praise; and such were the thoughtless gaiety and indiscretion of our orphan, that much might be said against her by those whose comments are not apt to be softened by indulgence and candor.

Ella was right. Colonel Vane did whisper to the baronet, "Who is that very fine young woman?" just as she passed and curtsied to him.

"You know, don't you, Baronet?" said the familiar Mr Linwood, winking his eye at the Colonel, "nobody better."

"Certainly, sir," replied Sir James, not pleased at the hint, "it is Miss Mordaunt of Bower Wood."

"That! is that Miss Mordaunt? I have heard *much* of her," observed the Colonel eagerly.

"And if you have heard the truth, you have not heard much good of her," said Mr Linwood.

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Colonel Vane. "It is impossible that Miss Mordaunt's reputation can be otherwise than unblemished."

"No; to be sure," said Sir James, "all that can be said against her is, that she is the greatest coquette in Christendom."

"And is that really the case?" demanded Colonel Vane with an air of mortification.

"To be sure it is," replied Mr Linwood, "as that good gentleman and a hundred others can testify. I do verily believe that she would be delighted to hear that her charms had driven two rival lovers to slugs in a saw pit, and who can say to what harm coquetry may not lead! Now this I call hearing no good of a woman, if you heard the truth."

"I am very much of your opinion on this subject, sir," replied the Colonel.

"Besides, she is a terrible dasher, and draws caricatures, and writes satirical verses; and not contented with displaying her fine person at an assembly in a country dance, she can't be contented without showing off in a reel of three. To be sure she is a beautiful creature, both face and figure; as to her *bloom, that*—you understand me. Heh! Colonel."

"Has she recourse to art already?" replied Colonel Vane. "In how different a light has she been represented to me!" At this moment the object of these censures again appeared in sight, and, being now leaning on the arm of a companion, had lost much of the conscious awkwardness she had before exhibited, and walked with her usual dignity and ease.

"It is a very fine day, ladies," said Sir James, bowing coldly.—"Unusually so for the time of year," replied Ella, blushing deeply, as she observed the earnest look of inquiry with which Colonel Vane beheld her. The eye averted with feminine modesty, the cheek suffused with sudden crimson, and the tone of voice sweet as the "shepherd's pipe upon the mountains," had their full effect upon Colonel Vane, and almost led him to doubt the

truth of what his companions had asserted. At this moment the wind blew off Ella's veil, and her whole face was disclosed to him in all its glowing beauty.

"There is something most uncommonly charming in her appearance," said Colonel Vane when Sir James rejoined him.

"There is indeed," said Sir James; "so take care of your heart, Vane, and be warned by my fate; for *I* was charmed, like many others; and presuming on such encouragement as no man could mistake, I offered, and was rejected; though every one told me, it was plain that she had refused other men on my account."

"I will bear witness," cried Mr Linwood, "to her paying you, Sir James, such attention as a man could not look off, indeed."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed the Colonel; "so young, so beautiful, and so unprincipled!"

"Yet," observed Sir James, "I will bet a wager, that when you know her, such are her powers of fascination, you will be her captive yourself, and learn to consider us as vile calumniators."

"Impossible, sir!" gravely returned the Colonel, "for I will *not* know Miss Mordaunt; I will not expose myself to the danger and the misery of having my senses charmed by a woman whom my moral feelings and my judgment must reject with contempt and aversion." So saying, he wished them good morning and left them.

"I'd bet a good round sum that she catches him for all that," said Mr Linwood, "and I vow I should like to see it. Your friend is a sad preaching fellow, Sir James, with his conscience, and his moral feelings. But, good bye—I have heard, I hope, of a candidate; and I must nail him if I can; and do you go and tell our friends that I have some one in my eye." On which they separated, while the Colonel and Ella proceeded to their respective homes; each, though with very different feelings, dwelling on the image and the qualities of the other.

Colonel Vane at a very early age had been adopted by his uncle, General Vane; and as his parents had a

daughter only one year younger than their son, they were soon reconciled to a separation, which was so likely to be conducive to the welfare of their child ; for they had no fortune themselves, and that of the General was considerable. By Mrs Vane, indeed, the loss of her son's society was much less felt than by his father ; for she adored her husband, and loved him with such an exclusive and devoted affection, that provided he was with her, every wish of her heart was gratified, and almost every other object in life vanished from her consideration. She loved him as the truly pious wish to love their Creator ; but, not so enviable as the latter, the object of *her* devotion was a mortal and perishable being, and the result of her affection was not the hope of future good, but the certainty of present misery. When Edmond Vane was fifteen, his father, who was on a visit to General Vane, then in decaying health, was drowned in saving the life of his son, who had been upset in the middle of a wide and rapid river with bags of shot in his pockets, which weighed him down as soon as he endeavored to swim. The unhappy parent upheld his son till his safety was secure by a rope thrown to him by a spectator on the shore ; but, exhausted by his efforts, he sunk himself never to rise again, before he could receive similar aid. The grief of Edmond Vane, though as violent and as lasting as his father's death and the mode of it could render it, was slight in comparison of the deep despair of the unhappy widow ; while in the paroxysm of her agonies, she could scarcely be prevented from vowing never to behold the child who had been, though innocently, the cause of his father's death. Nor were these feelings combatted by the usual power of parental affection ; because, as her son had never lived with her, her maternal tenderness towards him had never been properly called forth ; he had therefore purchased his expected and soon inherited fortune by the loss of something, as he himself thought, more valuable—namely, a mother's love. General Vane did not long survive his brother, and he left a very handsome property to Ed-

mond Vane, desiring in his will that he should take possession of it at eighteen, provided that he immediately entered the army, and followed the profession of a soldier.

The first act of Edmond Vane's majority was to divide his income with his mother, whose circumstances were excessively narrow, and to settle an independent fortune on his sister. But even this act of filial piety could not soften his mother's heart in his favor sufficiently to induce her to see him. "I honor, I admire, I bless, and I pray for him," she said, "but I cannot see, I cannot live with him." He however saw his sister occasionally, and not long after he followed her to her grave, cut off in the bloom of seventeen by a sudden affection of the lungs. His mother bore this new calamity far better than *he* did. Absorbed still in one overwhelming grief, her heart was not alive to a second,—nor yet could the loss of her daughter reconcile her to the idea of seeing her son. About this time one of her own relations died, and left her a large personal property; and perhaps she was gratified with being no longer forced to owe pecuniary obligations to that child whose filial love she could not adequately return. She was however at last prevailed upon to see him; and before he went abroad to fight the battles of his country he had the satisfaction of obtaining his mother's blessing, and being clasped, however unwillingly, in her maternal embrace.

When Colonel Vane returned from abroad, he was permitted to see her again, but his presence continued to remind her so forcibly of the misfortune which he had been the innocent means of bringing upon her, that he felt conscious she rather endured than liked his society; and therefore filial piety made him at length forego the indulgence which filial affection coveted. This disappointment to his feelings, and another of a more painful nature, had given a pernicious shade to his character; and, by injuring his own capability of permanent happiness, had weakened if not destroyed his power to form

the happiness of another. When his uncle, his father, and his sister died, and his mother refused to admit him to her presence, Edmond Vane found himself in the most painful of all situations to an affectionate heart; for he had no object to love, no one to live for,—and he pined in the bloom of existence for some one to whom he could turn with the yearnings of interest and tenderness. At this moment, and while his mind became saddened and distrustful from the consciousness that, less fortunate than his fellow creatures, maternal tenderness to him, and him alone, was a name, he was thrown by accident into the society of a very artful and beautiful woman several years older than himself. To this well practised coquette he became immediately an object for her power to be exercised upon, and she began to spread her toils with as much eagerness, though less ability than usual; for it required little art to fascinate an inexperienced youth, to whom the accents of affectionate regard from the soft voice of woman were irresistible, because hitherto unexperienced; and while her beauty dazzled his senses, and her attentions flattered his vanity, the almost caressing familiarity of her manner gratified his feelings, and excited his grateful affection. He fancied, and he *called* his feelings *love*;—but he was mistaken.—The lady herself fancied them so too.—However, having gained the prize, and heard the declaration of his fondness, she rejected it as not worth keeping, as her ambition looked to a much higher connexion; and while the unhappy Edmond was enduring all the agonies of disappointed passion, she accepted the hand of an old and decrepid nobleman, and the unprincipled coquette naturally enough became the adulterous wife.

It was unlikely that a trial of this nature, and the contemplation of a character such as Lady L.'s, should tend to retard the influence of that jealousy, suspicion, or distrust, which were beginning to steal over the wounded mind of Edmond Vane, and to poison his enjoyment of female society by weakening his confidence in woman. But though he closed his heart rigidly against the attrac-

tions of the sex, he longed earnestly, at the same time, to surrender that heart whenever his caution and his judgment should sanction the wishes of his affections. Meanwhile, too well principled to seduce an innocent woman, too moral and too refined to associate with a depraved one, he remained a single and unattached individual, vainly endeavoring to find out a woman whose manners should be such as to satisfy his almost diseased nicety of feeling. Such was the state of his mind when he first came to W——, and saw Ella Mordaunt, of whom he had heard so exalted a character, that he almost believed she would prove the being whom he had so long sought, till he reflected that he had heard her praises chiefly from a woman whose manners, were she *his* wife, would make him frantic with jealousy, and from a man who was going to marry this woman with all the joyful certainty of confiding affection.

“No, no,” said Edmond Vane to himself, “Clinton’s opinion of women and mine are too opposite, for me to trust to him implicitly;” and no sooner was he arrived on a visit to this very Clinton, than the character given of Ella by sir James and Mr Linwood sufficiently proved that his distrust was well founded.

Ella Mordaunt was indeed of all women the worst calculated, in the then existing style of her manners, to be the chosen mistress and the wife of a jealous and suspicious man. She had lost her parents at an early age; but their loss had been well supplied to her by the watchful care and judicious tenderness of an aunt, who, having met with a disappointment in love, had resolved never to marry, and had devoted herself to the education of her young and interesting charge. Humble herself from piety, and benevolent from nature, the instructress of Ella Mordaunt labored so incessantly to make her pupil a stranger to the pride and self-importance commonly instilled into heiresses, that she impelled her into a contrary extreme; and the heiress of Bower Wood, fine tempered and benevolent as her preceptress herself, became only too affable and too easy of access; and her



wish to please, and make all persons satisfied with themselves, was so general and so active, that her manner was too indiscriminatingly kind to gratify the pride of the consciously deserving, and resembled more that self-interested and universal civility requisite in the candidate at an election, than the unenforced urbanity of an independent gentlewoman. It was this manner, whose fascinations were exercised upon and equally felt by persons of all ranks and ages, which, as Ella grew up and was introduced into the world, not only gained her the reputation of a determined coquette, but, as she felt the universal influence which it gave, excited in her that very spirit of coquetry of which she was at first innocent,—while her alarmed and astonished mistress could almost have exclaimed with Albini in Count Basil :

“—————Every blessing with thee go,  
My most tormenting and most pleasing charge !  
Like vapor from the mountain stream art thou,  
Which lightly rises on the morning air,  
And shifts its fleeting form with every breeze,  
For ever varying, and for ever graceful,  
Endearing, generous, bountiful, and kind ;  
Vain, fanciful, and fond of worthless praise ;  
Courteous and gentle—————”

“But such a witching mien thy follies show,  
They make a very idiot of reproof,  
And smile it to disgrace. What shall I do with thee ?”

But the solitudes and the pride of affection were destined soon to close for this most excellent woman. Early decay, the consequence of early and concealed uneasiness, surely though slowly undermined her existence; and Ella once more, and more consciously than before, an orphan, was doomed to follow her only dear relation, her more than mother, to an untimely grave. The place in her family was indeed soon filled up by another relation; but not so the place in her heart; that place which positive qualities of a most distinguished nature had given her lost relative a right to possess exclusively. Her successor had *no* positive qualities. She was not ill-natured, not unpleasant, not uncultivated; and if not an agreeable, no one could say she was not a respecta-

ble superintendant of the family, and chaperone to the mistress of Bower Wood.

The day after Ella Mordaunt had seen Colonel Vane there was to be a public assembly at W——; and little knowing the true character of the man whom she was eager to know and anxious to please, she began the business of her toilette with much more interest than usual, because she hoped to shine before that being, whose approbation would, she knew, exalt her in her own opinion. Hitherto she had only felt a vague wish to charm generally, but never particularly; nor had she ever given Sir James, or any one, such encouragement as warranted their accusing her of dishonorable conduct. But he, like others, had been the dupe of his own vanity; and pique had led him, while speaking of her, to exaggerate her advances and apparent approbation, in order to heal some of the wounds which his self-love had received.

“I think Clinton will present him to me,” said Ella to herself, “and perhaps he will ask me to dance,—and yet I would rather he should not dance, even with *me*; I would rather he should sit out and talk. I should not like to see so *respectable* a man dance.”

Colonel Vane in the mean while was preparing for the ball, but without either of the intentions which Ella imputed to him. He was resolved not only not to dance with her, but not even to be presented to her; and while he recalled with admiration the beauty of her face and figure, and the touching tone of her voice, he felt absolutely angry with her for not being in mind as admirable as she was in person. “But does it signify to me,” said he to himself, “what her conduct or character are? To me they must be a matter of indifference;” while this boast of indifference was a proof of the contrary, and proved that Clinton’s and his Anna’s frequent commendations of Ella had not been without effect.

At length, the hour of going to the ball arrived, and Colonel Vane saw Ella, contrary to his expectations, modestly and simply attired, enter the room leaning on her relation’s arm. Ella, though she did not positively look

at Colonel Vane, perceived that he was near her, and was quite provoked at feeling that she was fluttered at the consciousness. "For what is he to me?" said she internally; and rallying her self-command, she advanced most graciously to meet a gentleman of her acquaintance, giving him both her hands with condescending courtesy, and receiving his bows and smiles with animated pleasure.

"There," thought Colonel Vane, "she is coquetting already; what man would not be flattered and led on by such encouragement? No; I see Mr Linwood was right, and Clinton is a blind and weak idolater."

Had he waited longer on that spot, he would have seen Ella receive as cordially her female friends, and even bestow as gracious smiles, and as low a bow of the head or curtsy, on the fiddlers who were known to her; so much more was her kindness the result of manner, and of a benevolent wish to please, than an intention to mislead or improperly notice any one. But, full of disgust, he walked away to the other end of the room, lamenting she had so much beauty, because it would enable her to do so much mischief. Ella, whose eyes watched his motions though they did not seem to do so, was conscious of his removal and his distance, and her animation ceased. Soon after she saw Clinton go up to his friend and whisper him; and with a beating heart she prepared for an introduction. But in vain; she saw Clinton apparently expostulate with Colonel Vane, and at length turn away abruptly, as if indignant. "If he should have refused to be presented to me!" thought Ella, "if he should not like my appearance!" and almost with tears in her eyes she accepted the offered hand of a young nobleman quartered in the town, and joined the dance. But the gloom which had overspread her brow began to disperse; when she saw Colonel Vane draw near the dancers as soon as she had reached the top of the set, and evidently with a view to observe her; while her consciousness that he was gazing at her gave a degree of timidity to her manner, which, though she knew it not, was more likely to please her fastidious observer than even the great excellence

which her dancing exhibited. Colonel Vane almost unconsciously followed her with his eyes, even to the end of the set, and could not help saying to himself, "Is this the dashing showing-off dancer whom Mr Linwood described? I never saw a more modest performer in my life; and her petticoats, instead of being calculated for display, are only just short enough for convenience! That brilliant color is not, *cannot* be natural,—that I admit;—but in respect to her mode of dancing he is quite mistaken;—and how beautiful she is! Why does she not trust to nature?" While these thoughts were passing in his mind, they gave a complacent expression to his countenance as he looked at Ella, which she, as she timidly glanced her eyes over it, could not fail to perceive; and regaining all her animation, and those animal spirits which so often led her to the very verge of impropriety, she began to talk, to laugh, to flirt as usual, and Colonel Vane, regaining all his prejudices against her, once more turned away angry and disgusted; and she danced down the second dance unheeded by him; or, if noticed, she saw no longer on his face the unconscious smile of involuntary approbation.

As soon as the set was ended, and Ella had made her parting curtsy to her partner, she went in search of her relation, Mrs Anne Mordaunt, who was at cards in an adjoining room; and having borrowed her housewife, that lady, like all ladies of the good times past, being provided with pockets, and all the convenient paraphernalia of thimble, scissors, &c. she retired behind a large skreen, which was placed between the card-tables and the door, in order to fasten the loops of her sandals, which had come unsown in the dance. While thus employed, the door of the room opened, and she heard Captain Clinton exclaim, "Stop, Vane, stop,—one word more. Do not be obstinate,—let me present you to Miss Mordaunt.

"Never," replied Colonel Vane, "never,—she is an arrant coquette,—and what I have seen confirms the character I have heard of her."

"This is all prejudice," replied Clinton in a low voice, "and if you knew her, you would adore her."

"The beauty I might ; but, believe me, my judgment would despise the *woman*."

"She has been calumniated."

"No ; have I not eyes ?"

"But they may be deceived if they look through the medium of prejudice. Come, do let me present you, and take her by the hand for two dances."

"What, I ! I take the hand which has been pressed familiarly, and as if a pressure of the hand was a mere matter of course, by almost every man in the room ?"

"Well. And should an innocent woman think this very common freedom a matter of importance ?"

"Mighty fine ! So then your motto is, I suppose, ' With the pure, all things are pure ! Cela pourriot mener bien loin, mon ami.'"

"No. I will not be presented to this exelling, but in my eyes unrespectable beauty ; but after I have looked over the card-players a little while, I shall go home." So saying he advanced in front of the skreen, while Ella slipped round it unperceived ; and hearing Captain Clinton shut the door, muttering "Confounded obstinacy !" as he did so, she gently opened it, then, scarcely able to stand, leaned for support against the wall of the passage leading from the card to the ball-room. She had stood there a minute or two, endeavoring to recollect herself, and banish from her mind the cruelly severe expressions which she had just overheard ; when Captain Clinton who had been in search of her, returned, intending to ask Mrs Anne, whither Miss Mordaunt had vanished. The moment he beheld her, the deadly paleness of her cheek and her disordered countenance filled him with apprehension, and he eagerly asked her what had happened. Instead of answering him she burst into tears ; and a suspicion of the truth coming across his mind, he was just going to interrogate her as closely as delicacy would allow him, when one of the waiters came running to him exclaiming, "Sir ! sir ! an express is come for you, sir !"

and you must go off directly to——;” and Captain Clinton, saying “I will return instantly,” did not wait to hear any more, but ran in search of the express.

Ella meanwhile alarmed lest Clinton should have been sent for to the lady to whom he was engaged, who was her intimate friend, remained where she was, awaiting his return! but in spite of her efforts, and the whispers of apprehensive friendship, her own wounded delicacy, her own offended self-respect, were uppermost in her thoughts, and she was relapsing into tears, when the door of the card-room opened, against which she was unconsciously leaning, and she was nearly thrown down,—while the person who eagerly caught her to save her from falling proved to be Colonel Vane himself! As soon as Ella saw to whom she was thus indebted, she sprang from him with involuntary indignation.

“Good heaven! I hope I have not hurt you, madam?” he exclaimed. “I was quite unconscious any one was leaning against the door. But you are pale; you seem faint,—pray, pray, let me support you!” while Ella, making one great effort, tried to reach the door of the ball-room; but overcome with a variety of emotions, her head grew giddy, and she grasped Colonel Vane’s arm for support; till one of the waiters, seeing her situation, brought her a chair and some water. The illness was, however, momentary. Ella’s recollection returned; and angry as she was with Colonel Vane, her resentment was a little softened by the anxious kindness with which he hung over her, and watched her returning color,—that color which he now saw he had unjustly imagined to be artificial, and which confusion, indignation, and strong emotion were bringing back in mantling blushes to her cheek.

“I am shocked—I am ashamed,—I cannot stay here,” cried Ella rising, but reseating herself, as her limbs trembled still. “Will you allow me, madam,” said Colonel Vane, “to inform the lady I saw with you of your illness?” while he was pleased to find she was properly alive to the awkwardness of her situation; and without waiting for her permission, he went in search of Mrs Anne

Mordaunt, who resigning her cards to a by-stander anxiously followed where he led ; and Colonel Vane, convincing himself that it was proper to leave the ladies to themselves, walked up and down the lobby at too great a distance to hear, but near enough to see them. At length Ella recovered herself sufficiently to tell Mrs Anne that she was very anxious to know why Captain Clinton did not return, and to whom he was sent for ; and as that lady was looking round in search of some one to send to inquire, Colonel Vane, thinking she wanted something, came up and offered his services, though, when he heard what Mrs Anne required, could he help being a little uneasy himself at the absence of his friend. The result of his immediate inquiries was, that Captain Clinton, finding the express came from his father, who was supposed to be dying, had instantly snatched off the servant's hat, jumped upon the servant's horse, and forgetful of Ella, and of every thing but the situation of a beloved parent, had ridden off as fast as he could.

I am happy to inform you, madam," said Colonel Vane when he returned, "that it is not the illness of your friend which has summoned him away ; but I am sorry to say he is gone to see his father, who is supposed to be at the point of death."

Ella bowed, but spoke not ; and Mrs Anne twaddled about green old age, and being here today and gone to-morrow.

"Had you honored me so far, madam," said Colonel Vane, "as to tell me the cause of your emotion and illness, I could have removed it sooner."

Ella, too sincere, too devoted to the rigid practice of truth, to allow him to attribute to sensibility on account of her friend, an emotion which certainly flowed from a very different source, blushing deeply, replied that her alarm concerning her friend had not been the cause of her illness, though it might probably increase it.

"Nay now, my dear," said Mrs Anne, "why deny an excess of feeling for others which distinguishes you, and does you so much honor ?—That is so like you !"

"I hope it is not like me," replied Ella, "to tell a falsehood.—My illness, or my emotion rather, had not, I assure you, so rational a source."

"Perhaps, perhaps, madam," said Colonel Vane, "I frightened and *hurt* you by opening the door, and nearly throwing you down?—If so, I should not easily forgive myself."

"Indeed, sir," returned Ella, faintly smiling at his alarm lest he had injured her person, and his unconsciousness of the serious injury he had done her mind,—"*indeed*, sir, you did not hurt, and scarcely did you alarm me; and my only danger, from your opening the door so suddenly, proceeded from my previous weakness."

"Well, it is very strange, my dear," said Mrs Anne, "That you of all persons in the world, should be taken thus faint and queer like a fine lady!—You were never so before."

"No,—and I hope never to be so again, dear cousin," replied Ella, trying to be gay; while Colonel Vane's eyes were fixed upon her with anxious inquiry. "Shall I call your coach, ladies?" said he; "surely the heat of the room will be too much for an invalid." But Ella, pleased perhaps to remain where she felt herself an object of interest, spite of his prejudices, to this severe censor of her conduct, declined the offer, and, declaring she was quite well again, re-entered the ball room, leaning on Mrs Anne Mordaunt. "If I might so far presume, madam, as to offer you my arm," said the Colonel. But Ella in no very flattering tone replied, "I thank you, sir, but I require no further assistance from you."

"So, so!" thought Colonel Vane; "she is not disposed, I see, to spoil *me*, whatever she may do *other people*, by her *graciousness*!"

When they entered the room, Ella declined all offers to dance, and was soon seated with some friends of both sexes at the end of the room, who formed a circle round her; and one of them being known to Colonel Vane, he was asked to join the party. "I will," said he, blushing, as he spoke, at his own versatility, "I will,—if you will do me



honor to present me first to those ladies," bowing to Ella and her cousin, "for without having had that honor I have presumed to address them." And Ella, though surprised and gratified beyond measure, made her curtsy and received his bow with a degree of formality which astonished Mrs Anne, who was already half in love with this celebrated and charming man.

At this moment a young lady came running up to Ella, to beg that she would indulge her so far as to dance a reel of three with her, as a large party had stayed on purpose to see it. Ella immediately replied,—“I was very unwell just now, Miss Tyrrell, and have declined dancing any more this evening; but that is not the reason of my refusing to comply with your request. I never will make such a public exhibition of myself again.”

“Dear me! Why, you did it at the last assembly!”

“Yes; but contrary both to my inclination and my judgment, and I have never forgiven myself, as Mrs Anne can testify, for having had the weakness to be overpersuaded to do what my ideas of propriety forbade.”

When she first began to speak, Colonel Vane absolutely *started*, and fixed his eyes on her face with gratified surprise; and when she had ended, he could hardly forbear *thanking* her for the pleasure she had given him.

“What a liar that Linwood is!” thought Colonel Vane. The young lady was not, however, as well satisfied with Ella’s discretion as he was; but saying she thought Miss Mordaunt more nice than wise, and it was very hard, for she could not dance the reel without another lady, she, with a saucy toss of her head, departed in search of a more obliging person.

But the Colonel’s faith in Mr Linwood’s descriptions was doomed to be still further shaken. Ella was asked if she had lately seen any of Mr Such-an-one’s caricatures.

“No,—I have not,” she answered; “I have such a dislike to caricatures and caricaturers (I mean of individual nature,) that I make it a scruple of conscience not to encourage so vile a practice by asking to see such productions.”

"But you draw yourself, Miss Mordaunt?" eagerly asked the Colonel.

"Very little, indeed; I sketch trees and flowers from nature, and views when travelling; but the 'human face divine' is above my imitation."

"I agree with you," replied the Colonel, "in hatred to caricatures. I think it a very low order of humor, and a very high one of malignity; and I am apt to believe that there is a little warp in the mind that takes delight in them. I dislike lampoons of the pen as well as lampoons of the pencil, though not equally, as the former are chiefly directed against mental, and therefore perhaps corrigible imperfections; whereas the latter are always levelled at bodily imperfections, which are surely more objects of pity than of ridicule."

"But," replied Ella, "though less in the degree of malice, the lampoon is of the same quality as the caricature, and the mind that could write the one, if it could, would probably draw the other. For my part, I cordially dislike and discourage both, and so I do that species of mischief and fun, which is neither, but partakes of the malignant nature of each—I mean what is called *quizzing*, or *playing* on persons in order to make them ridiculous. Indeed," said she, "I am very much of Sir Peter Teazle's opinion, that wit and good nature are more nearly allied than most persons are aware of."

It was impossible for Ella to mistake the animated look of approbation with which Colonel Vane regarded her, as she finished speaking and ventured to raise her eyes to his; but just as he was going to reply, a lady came across the room, and whispered something in her ear; on which Ella took her arm, and went to the opposite side, where she seated herself next to a little deformed, overdressed young woman, who seemed an object of particular attention to several young men and women who surrounded her. Soon after Ella gave this lady her arm, and walked up and down the room with her, and seemed listening to her with such courteous attention, that Colonel Vane supposed this extraordinary

looking being was either a person of high rank and consequence, or celebrated for some extraordinary mental endowments. At last, he ventured to ask who the lady was, leaning on Miss Mordaunt's arm.

"Oh! that is Miss Rawlins," replied one of the ladies.

"And who is Miss Rawlins?" asked the Colonel; "by the attention she excites, and even by the manner of Miss Mordaunt to her, I conclude she is a person of some consequence."

"No," was the reply; "it is because she is a person of *no* consequence *now*, poor thing! that Miss Mordaunt pays her such attention."

"You laid an emphasis on *now*; was she *ever* of consequence then?"

"O yes!—a rich heiress like Miss Mordaunt herself; and then even her unhappy person was forgotten, and her dress escaped ridicule, and she had as many partners as any one; but she lost all her money by the villany of an agent, and with it the respect formerly paid her; and it is only lately that she has recovered her spirits sufficiently to accompany the relation, on whom she is now dependent, to our balls as usual. But as, considering her person, she is foolishly fond of dress and dancing, the malicious, whom her riches kept in awe, presume on her poverty to make a joke of her; and there is one young man (by the by, it is the very young man who draws caricatures,) who asks her to dance in order to make her expose herself. And I overheard that young lady whisper Miss Mordaunt that he was going to do it now. So, with her usual benevolence she went to prevent this malevolent pleasure, by taking the poor little thing under her protection; and you see she has succeeded, and is bringing her hither."

At this moment Ella, her countenance beaming with gratified benignity, returned to the party; and being willing to give her protegee consequence by presenting her to a character so distinguished as Colonel Vane, she introduced them to each other; and the Colonel, emulous of

Ella's liberality, paid Miss Rawlins distinguishing attention.

"Bless me my dear child!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs Anne Mordaunt, interrupting a pleasant conversation, "what did you do with my housewife? You did not give it to me again." Alarmed at the probable consequences of this interrogatory, if *followed up* closely, Ella could scarcely force herself to answer, "I—I left it in the card-room, I believe."

"Shall I fetch it?" cried the Colonel; "A housewife did you say? pray, whereabouts did you leave it?"

"Oh! I dare say, my dear, you left it behind the skreen," replied Mrs Anne; "I saw you go behind it to sew the broken loops of your sandals; and as you were taken ill there, and went into the passage for air, you naturally enough forgot the thread case I had lent to you."

"The skreen! what skreen?" cried Colonel Vane, a suspicion of the cause of Ella's distress shooting instantly across his mind; when, looking at Ella, her pale cheek and evident agitation confirmed all that he suspected; and equally shocked and embarrassed, but far more distressed than she was, he said, "I will go and seek for the thread case," and left the room.

"Well, I protest you are going to be ill again," cried the affectionate Mrs Anne; but roused by this observation, Ella called up every feeling of virtuous pride and conscious innocence of intention at least, and prepared herself to meet Colonel Vane, when he returned, with such calmness, as should prove that she felt it was for him to feel abashed in her presence from the discovery that she had heard his severe censures on her conduct; censures which a very short acquaintance with her had evidently done much towards removing; and she remembered with great satisfaction, that he had desired to be presented to her before he had suspected that she had overheard him forswear acquaintance with her for ever.

Colonel Vane was sometime before he returned. As soon as he entered the card-room, and saw the skreen, he conceived how Ella might be totally hidden from his

view, and yet overhear all his conversation ; and when he went behind the skreen himself, and saw the housewife evidently thrown down in haste, for every thing belonging to it was scattered on the ground, he discovered, with a pang very like remorse, the evident perturbation and agony she must have endured, while, as he came in front of the skreen, she had stolen out on the other side, and hastened into the passage. But why should Ella be thus affected ? Had a coquette, then, so much real feeling, and such delicacy on the score of reputation ? Was it wounded vanity alone, or a better feeling, that stole the color from her cheek, and drowned her eyes in tears ? Was his good opinion of more consequence to her than that of others ? But it was remotely, and undefinedly even to himself, that this idea flitted across his mind ; for must not such a thought be the result of the most ill-founded and contemptible conceit ? Yet why not attribute this sensibility to censure, to the virtuous horror natural to a young and innocent mind, in learning, perhaps for the first time, that the thoughtless gaiety and artless warmth of her manner had exposed her to imputations at which her soul revolted ? And had he not that evening witnessed proofs of the rectitude of her feelings, and the benevolence of her sentiments, which tallied with this construction on her conduct ? This, too, would account for the cold dignified civility of her manner. Wounded vanity would have showed itself in haughty pique and petulant rudeness ; culpable indifference to blame would have exhibited itself in increased gaiety, and an increased inattention to the common restraints of society ; but wounded sensibility, and offended delicacy, and conscious innocence unjustly accused, would have acted, he could not deny it to himself, exactly as Ella did ; and with feelings difficult to describe, he took up Mrs Anne Mordaunt's housewife and its furniture, and returned into the ball-room. He presented them to her in silence, and without daring to look towards Ella, who remained silent also, but soon entered with seeming composure, into a conversation with the gentleman next her.

It was near the hour for the company to assemble at the tea-tables ; but Mrs Anne thinking Ella had better return home, as she complained of a headach, one of the gentlemen was sent to call their carriage ; and having got it up immediately, he presented his arm to Mrs Anne Mordaunt, while the Colonel offered his to Ella ; but taking that of the gentleman next her, she smiled and said, "Excuse me, Colonel, if I prefer the support of an old friend to that of a *stranger* ;" and she spoke the word in such a manner, as to make the Colonel suspect she meant by "*stranger*" to say "enemy." And mortified and conscience stricken, he sighed deeply, and followed them in silence to the carriage ; nor did he leave the door till they drove off ; when to his very respectful bow Ella replied by a kiss of her hand, and her cousin by several gracious inclinations of her head.

"Oh ! what a dear, charming, beautiful man that is !" cried Mrs Anne, as soon as they drove off ; "I hope, my dear, you have invited him to Bower Wood ?"

"No, indeed, madam," replied Ella, "nor shall I invite him."

"Not invite him ! Why, you amaze me. Pray, tell me"—Here Ella, not choosing to explain herself at that moment, interrupted her by begging her to let down one of the glasses, because she was very faint ; then throwing herself back in the carriage, she sighed in a manner so unusual for her, that her affectionate relation was alarmed, and asked her if she was unhappy. "No, not unhappy *now*, only agitated," she replied, "but I will tell you more tomorrow." Then falling into a reverie, she spoke no more till the carriage arrived at Bower Wood ; where hastily wishing Mrs Anne good night, she retired to her own apartment.

In two days time Captain Clinton returned, having left his father out of danger ; and he heard, with no small degree of triumph, that Colonel Vane had desired to be presented to Miss Mordaunt, and had conquered most of his prepossessions against her. But he knew the human heart too well to express all that he felt, or all that he

foresaw. He knew that Colonel Vane would naturally enough be inclined, if left to himself, to admire Ella even more than justice warranted, to reconcile his own heart to the injustice he had done her in not liking her enough at first, but he also knew that pride, and an aversion to own himself in the wrong, would probably retard the progress of his admiration, if he seemed eager to urge it on; he therefore did not appear to derive any triumph over his friend from this change of opinion, though he could not help owing to him his suspicions that Ella had overheard their conversation.

"I am *sure* she did," replied Colonel Vane.

"What makes you think so?" asked Captain Clinton.

"I wish to be excused telling you," replied the Colonel, too delicate to disclose, even to Ella's friend, the emotions he had witnessed; and Captain Clinton who wished nothing more ardently than a union betwixt Ella and Vane, and who knew how likely this discovery of the Colonel's would be to interest him in her favor, if he was left to the operations of his own mind, pursued the discourse no further, but went to pay a visit to Ella herself. He found *her* more communicative than Colonel Vane, for she told him what she had overheard,—she described all that had passed after he left her, and her conviction that Colonel Vane was certain that she had overheard all that had passed.

"But I hope you believe," cried Clinton, "that he has altered his opinion of you?"

"I conclude that he has, or he would not have desired to be presented to me; but if his ideas of propriety are so very rigid, I shall forfeit his good opinion again very soon; though, spite of my better judgment, I am almost ashamed to own that I felt myself *influenced* by his presence into a change of manner."

"Aye indeed! how so?"

"When my old playfellow, young Danvers came up to speak to me after an absence of some months, I actually drew back my hand as I bade him welcome, because for-

sooth your fastidious friend had censured the readiness with which I suffered my hand to be pressed ! But ashamed of my condescension to the humors of this strange man, I held it out to him when he left me to join the dance, resolved that Colonel Vane should like me on my own terms, or dislike me as he chose ; for that, if I was conscious of no improper feeling while giving my hand to the friends who accosted me, there was no harm in so doing."

"No—not in your own eyes, nor in that of your friends ; but great harm in the eyes of a jealous man and a lover."

"But Colonel Vane is not my lover."

"I am not so sure of that," he replied ; and Ella started from her seat with an exclamation which certainly partook as much of joy as surprise.

"At least, I will venture to say that he is very likely to *become* your lover ; and therefore you are to consider whether he is a prize so well worth having, as to make it worth your while to reform your manners in order to secure him."

"Reform my manners, sir ? and do *you too* distrust and condemn me ?"

"Oh no !—I am only *your friend* ; nor, as I am neither jealous nor suspicious, would your manner disturb me, even if I were your lover. I think it the most fascinating and delightful manner possible ; but it is a most dangerous and a most misleading one. Your manner to me, for instance, if I were not an engaged man, would lead me to suppose I was a very great favorite with you, and that my addresses would be favorably received."

"Absurd !" replied Ella, "when I venture to let you see by my manners how much I like you because you *are* an engaged man, and therefore cannot suppose I *mean* any thing more than the kindness of friendship. It is for this reason that I am so fond of the notice and society of married men ; for it is hateful to have one's motives misconstrued, and to have it thought, if one is civil to a man, that one is angling for offers."



"Yes—and therefore you make almost all the wives of your acquaintance jealous, and arm their tongues with a thousand slanders to let off against your reputation and innocence."

"Well, Captain Clinton, I can only say," replied Ella, rather piqued at his sincerity, "I can only say, that if my manners and habits be ever so wrong, they *are* my habits and manners,—they are *part* of me, and I cannot be hypocrite enough to change or disguise them."

"Not without you have an adequate motive."

"And what would be one?"

"The wish of making yours a heart that is worthy of you. I know you admire Colonel Vane, and I believe you might love him."

"May be so; but must I therefore adopt all his whims, or rather act a part in order to captivate him?"

"I think that you must either give up all idea of him, or act conformably to his ideas of right. He is a man of a jealous and distrustful nature; but it is his only fault. If you were living with a nervous person, whom the shutting of a door hard would throw into a fit, you would either quit that person, or take care to shut the door gently; so, if you were to love a jealous man, you must either learn to abstain from what might give him umbrage, or conquer your attachment."

"I should conquer my attachment!" exclaimed Ella indignantly; "but I have as yet no attachment to conquer, nor *will* I have; for I could never be happy with a man who was liable to mistake the gaiety of innocence for constitutional levity, and the freedom resulting from an affectionate heart, for the forwardness of a depraved one."

"Well; time will show whether you can keep this resolution, and in the meanwhile my friend must make his own way with you."

"I assure you, sir," said Ella gravely, "he shall never come *hither*, an invited guest of *mine*—he shall not have the opportunity of suspecting that the '*arrant coquette*' has a design on his heart;—whenever we meet, as I like

his conversation, and honor his character, I will not avoid him ; but never, never shall he have it in his power to say that Ella Mordaunt condescended to court the acquaintance and attention of a man to whom she was an object of censure and suspicion."

"I commend your spirit," replied Captain Clinton ; "and should Colonel Vane express his wonder at not being your invited guest, I will tell him the reason."

"By all means," replied Ella ; and Captain Clinton took his leave, rejoiced at her determination, and resolved to impart it immediately to his friend, as he well knew it would exalt her in his estimation, and make a man of his nature still more eager to obtain that favor which the indignant pride of an offended woman was eager to withhold from him.

He was not wrong in his conjectures.—Though sorry and mortified, Colonel Vane commended the determination of Ella, acquiesced in its propriety, and did not resent it by his conduct ;—on the contrary, he paid her the most respectful attention whenever they met, and Ella at length discovered that it was not so easy to retain her determination not to love 'a jealous and distrustful man.'

But what became of the election ?—The old members were returned, much to the mortification of busy Mr Linwood, who could not succeed in stirring up an opposition, and who, owing Colonel Vane a grudge for not consenting to stand, took his revenge by telling every one he was making love to the heiress, who would jilt him as she had done every one else. To be brief ; Colonel Vane's leave of absence had nearly expired, and he was about to leave W——, when Ella was prevailed upon to give a small select ball to celebrate Mrs Anne Mordaunt's birthday.

"To be sure," said Captain Clinton, "as Vane is going away, you will break through your resolution, and invite him."

"No—his approaching departure is a reason why I should *not* invite him—for let me continue the effort but a *little* longer and my trial will be over."

“ Oh ! then you own it is an effort ? ”

“ Yes,—and a great one too, but I will persevere to the end.” And Captain Clinton was resolved she should have the merit of persevering, and yet that his friend should be at the ball ; for he wished him to see Ella to the greatest advantage, namely, at her own house. He wished him also to see the simplicity yet magnificence with which her own exquisite taste had ornamented the apartments ;—in short, he had set his mind on Colonel Vane’s being once at least the guest of Ella ; and after talking the whole matter over tête-à-tête with Mrs Anne, who was the queen of the feast, she gave him leave to invite Colonel Vane, and promised to take all the responsibility on herself. But as Captain Clinton knew the Colonel would not go on Mrs Anne’s invitation only, he took care how he worded it, and accosted him with,—“ So, Vane, at last the embargo is taken off, and you are invited to the ball at Bower Wood ? ”

“ Indeed ! ” replied the Colonel, more gratified than he chose to own even to himself,—“ Indeed ! ” and would you advise me to accept the invitation ? ”

“ To be sure. I know you are going out of town till the day arrives—but you will be here time enough for that.”

“ Certainly I shall,—but where is the card ? I must answer it.”

“ There is no card—Miss Mordaunt has issued no cards, (which was indeed the truth,) and a verbal answer by me will be sufficient.”

“ Very well,” said Colonel Vane ; “ then tell Miss Mordaunt I will have the honor to wait on her. But,” added he after a pause, “ she ought not to have invited me. If she was right in the first instance, she was wrong in the last,—and I should have respected her more had she remained firm in her resolution.”

“ You are the most ungrateful, romantic, ridiculous being I ever knew,” replied the secretly pleased Clinton, who knew that Ella had acted as the Colonel thought she ought to have done ; “ Why, man ! you will always re-

fine away your own happiness, and utterly destroy that of your wife, if you ever have one."

"My wife's notions," replied he, "must be as refined as my own, or she would never *be* my wife."

That day Colonel Vane left W——, and did not return till it was time to dress for the ball at Bower Wood; therefore he had no opportunity of seeing Ella, and finding out the deceit which had been put on him.

Ella meanwhile had been preparing for her entertainment; and when every thing was completed, and the gratified Mrs Anne Mordaunt had surveyed all the new decorations of the apartments, and beheld the taste with which the old ones had been arrayed, she declared that Ella had exceeded even herself. But the mistress of the elegant mansion, the directress of the splendid feast, moved through the brilliant suite of rooms pensive, anxious, and absent;—for the eye that she most wished to please would not behold the charm which she had labored to spread around, the lips whose praises she most coveted would not breathe in her ear the accents of admiration.

She was indulging these tender thoughts, for tender they certainly were, and, retiring into an inner room from the crowd which was just beginning to assemble, was replacing the head of a rare and newly purchased plant which had escaped from the lath which supported it, when turning round she beheld the object of her reverie beside her! while almost with a scream of astonishment she exclaimed, in return to his smile of pleasure and his respectful bow, "Colonel Vane, is it possible, sir, that I see *you* here!"

Equally surprised in his turn, Colonel Vane replied, "Did not Captain Clinton deliver my answer to you, madam, and tell you I would have the honor to wait on you?"

"No—indeed he did not," said Ella with an arch smile, not a little pleased to find that without any infringement of her dignity Colonel Vane was her guest; and dismissing entirely from her mind the idea which at first

disturbed her, a suspicion wholly unworthy of Colonel Vane's character, that he had presumed to come uninvited, she attributed his appearance at her ball to the injudicious though well meant deception of Captain Clinton and Mrs Anne Mordaunt.

But though Ella's countenance, which had worn an expression of even haughty surprise when she first saw Colonel Vane, now wore one of archness and pleasure, Colonel Vane was by no means satisfied with either the one expression or the other. It was evident she did not expect him, or that she was acting a part, the question was, whether she had invited him, or *had not*?—"But I will not remain any longer in this suspense," said he to himself, "and I will tell her that if she wishes me to go, I will go directly."

Just as he had made this resolution, Ella, whom politeness forbade to let Colonel Vane know he was there without invitation, said to him, "As this is the first time I have had the honor of seeing you at my house, sir, I hope you will allow me to show you what it contains of value; in this room are some very fine pictures."

"In seeing you, Miss Mordaunt, I see," replied the Colonel "what is most valuable and most precious here."

"*Indeed!*" said Ella, archly smiling, "*brilliant* perhaps, but not *precious*, surely, in *your* estimation?"

"Spare me, Miss Mordaunt, spare me the mortification of recollecting the moment now long past, and always repented of, when I was *unjust*, and *you calumniated*." Ella bowed, and turned away her head; for she was conscious that her eyes were filled with tears, but tears of pleasure and of tenderness. "Allow me to add," resumed the Colonel, "that I can look at nothing here with satisfaction, not even at *you*, till I am assured that I am a welcome and a bidden guest."

"I would not," she replied, "have told you a perhaps unpleasant truth; but, when thus interrogated, I will not be so mean as to tell you a falsehood. You are a *welcome*, but not a *bidden* guest. I *did* not, *would* not, *could* not invite you to my house, you *know* I could not, till some

acknowledgment on your part, that you had hastily and erroneously judged me, had appeased my offended delicacy. But *now* you have said all that was necessary—you have owned that you were unjust—and I will remember of the past, only those judicious hints for my conduct which it afforded me, and which may serve in some points to direct the future.”

“Miss Mordaunt—madam—you confound me by your goodness,” he replied; and so wayward are the fancies of a jealous man, he *feared*, he *thought* that she was now giving him too much encouragement. “But, madam, you must allow me to inquire who has presumed thus to impose both on you and me.”

“Oh! I *know* no more on that subject than *you* do—but I suspect it was a lady, and the queen of the evening, Mrs Anne Mordaunt who candidly told me, she should not think her entertainment complete, unless it was graced by your presence.”

— “But Captain Clinton brought me the invitation.”

“Very likely, deceived himself by Mrs Anne; or if he were in the plot, surely you will not be very angry?”

“One man, madam,” replied Colonel Vane gravely, “ought to be careful how he presumes to jest with another.”

“Colonel Vane!” cried Ella, turning pale with alarm, and laying her hand involuntarily on his arm while she fixed her eyes earnestly on his face. He understood and felt the *force* of the appeal; and gently pressing the hand whose unconscious grasp was not lost on him, he told her, that though he must reprove, he would not resent Captain Clinton’s subterfuge, if he were really to blame. And soon after, as Mrs Anne took nearly the whole blame on herself, Colonel Vane thanked both him and her for having betrayed him into a very charming evening, and Ella retired to rest happier than she had been for many a day; for Colonel Vane had appeared a lover in all but the name, and she flattered herself that before he left W—— he would make her a declaration in form. What was now become of her resolution, never to marry

a jealous and distrustful man? Alas! it was forgotten; or this one fault was lost in the blaze of numberless real or imagined virtues. But she knew not yet the character of Colonel Vane, nor the caution that influences every action and every resolve of a man of his disposition.

Colonel Vane did love Ella, passionately love her—but though he had the firmest faith in her innocence and her principles, her manners were not such as he should wish for in his wife. It was a *manner* to invite attention and even affection from every one, because it seemed to promise both; and whether the impelling motive was benevolence or coquetry, it exposed a woman to the danger of solicitations; a danger to which even virtue itself should shrink from being exposed—for craving and gratified vanity has undone, as he justly thought, more women in a year, than originally vicious inclinations in ten; and if he were called abroad in the service of his country, as he would probably be, how could he without anxiety, wearying and incessant, leave a wife alone and unprotected, and to her own guidance, whose beauty could not fail to attract admirers, and whose manners were such as to give those lovers encouragement?"

So reasoned and so felt Colonel Vane, though he loved with ardor,—or rather *because* he loved with ardor; and he resolved to leave W—— without making any avowal of his love and trying to obtain a confession of hers in return, wishing to try what effect some weeks of absence would have on his attachment, and on the preference which Ella felt for him; and wisely considering that, unless their mutual regard could stand that test, he did not love *her* sufficiently to overlook her faults, nor she *him* sufficiently to bear with his sense of them. As he was now an allowed visiter at Bower Wood, he went thither to bid her farewell, having studied what he would say when he arose to depart, something tender enough to prove how much he admired her, yet not sufficiently explicit to commit himself; while Ella on her side, *if* Colonel Vane did *not* make a declaration of his sentiments, had settled what sort of leave she would take of *him*—it was

to be one so fully worded, and so calmly delivered, that he should not suspect how much she was disappointed, and how deeply she regretted his departure. He came to Bower Wood accordingly the day before he was to set off; and Ella, as much on her guard as he was, received him with composure, though as her cousin was absent, she received him tête-à-tête. But while he sat there, gazing with ever-increasing admiration on that face which he should soon behold no more, the idea of his approaching separation from Ella so much unmanned him that he felt, if he trusted himself longer in her presence, he should betray his heart entirely to her. He therefore suddenly arose and took her hand, meaning to say what he intended, and to express the usual parting wishes; but overcome by emotion, neither he nor Ella spoke a single word,—but he bowed upon her hand in silence, and then, not even looking at her, rushed out of the room.

Ella sat for some time after he left her, absorbed in a reverie, at once painful and pleasant. True, he had not made the long desired and long expected proposal, but he had quitted her in such evident emotion and such expressive silence as love alone could have occasioned; and she could not help hoping that he might write the feelings and wishes which he did not speak. But then the thought that day after day would pass, week after week, month after month perhaps, without her eye beholding, her ear hearing, or her mind holding sweet communion with his, filled her with almost intolerable agony; and to remain on that spot where she had seen and conversed with him, but could see and converse with him no longer, seemed such an increase of her suffering, that she very gladly took advantage of an excuse to hasten into Devonshire, though the cause of her journey gave her considerable pain; for it was no other than the illness of her relation Mrs Anne Mordaunt, who was ordered for a threatening inflammation on the lungs into the mild climate of Sidmouth. Thither, therefore, she bore her drooping charge; but bore in vain; the power of medicine, of salubrious air, and of the most unremitting at-



tion, failed to save this harmless and unoffending being from the disease that impended over her; and before they had been resident six weeks in the West, Ella, was fated to follow a second adopted parent to her last home.

The occupation of watching by the bed of sickness, painful as it was, served to divert Ella's mind from the anxieties of an every day increasing and perhaps hopeless passion; and when the necessity of these attentions was over, Ella felt herself again thrown on the world an unprotected orphan, and also restored to all the painful consciousness which had hitherto been suspended.—She was again obliged to look round for a companion, and felt added regret for the little prospect she now had of obtaining, what in her orphan state was so particularly desirable, the protection of a husband. While her plans continued unfixed, she received an invitation to stay at the house of a married friend in London, and thither she immediately repaired, glad of any change and any scene which would take her from herself, and weaken the power of certain images and recollections in her mind.

Colonel Vane meanwhile, who found that in leaving W—— he had not left his attachment behind him, but that he

“Dragged at each remove a lengthening chain,”

was eager to learn of Captain Clinton all possible intelligence of Ella and her movements, and therefore kept up a regular correspondence with him. He was consequently informed of the death of Mrs Anne Mordaunt, and of Ella's visit to London. “She is again, then,” thought Colonel Vane, “alone and unprotected. O that I could at once resolve to offer her the protection of a husband! But as other men may do that only too soon, I will, as soon as duty allows me, go to London and see how she is situated;”—and as much impelled by jealousy as by love, Colonel Vane set off for the metropolis.

Ella had now been two months in London; and though she was conscious of a deeply-rooted attachment, she was not unhappy, for the excellence of her temper

led her to be and appear pleased with the efforts made to amuse her; and she could not but be gratified with the attentions paid her by the gentlemen who visited at the house of her friends, amongst whom were men whose situation in life was such as to authorize them to aspire to her hand. But the encouraging smiles, the condescending familiarity, which before she became exclusively attached to one man had distinguished her conduct to all, were now wholly withheld; and though the eye of Colonel Vane no longer beheld her, her manner was such as would have gratified even his jealous feeling and rigid ideas of propriety, if a being under the influence of jealousy be capable of ever seeing things as they really are. Besides, the recent loss of an unoffending and affectionate relation, the consciousness of her being a lone and insulated being, and the conviction that wealth and independence are empty possessions if they are unaccompanied with the ties of family love, and the pleasures of domestic intercourse, damped that gaiety which used to carry her into excess of liveliness, and threw a pensive shade over her countenance, which, without diminishing its beauty, increased its interest.

The first night of Colonel Vane's arrival in London, he went to the theatre, intending to present himself the next day, authorized by a letter from Captain Clinton, at the house of Ella's friends. It so happened that Ella and her friends, attended by gentlemen who had dined with them, went to the same theatre, and sat in a box opposite to the one which the Colonel had entered.—What a welcome opportunity for a man of his disposition!—He could watch unseen the conduct of the woman he loved, when surrounded by other men, and when unconscious of his restraining presence! He *did* watch her, observing as he did so the paleness of her cheek and the thinness of her person, occasioned, he hoped, by anxious attendance on her relation, and also (but this he scarcely dared whisper to himself) by some anxiety of a more tender nature.—Nor was she in her usual spirits.—In short, he really saw her as I have de-

scribed her above ; and with all his propensity to turn and twist her manner and conduct into what he disapproved, he was forced at length to allow his heart to be gladdened by the conviction that her conduct that evening, though she was surrounded by men who evidently admired, and sought every means of engaging her attention, and paying her what the French call *les petits soins*, was exactly such as he should wish to be that of his wife ; and now from the bottom of his soul he wished that wife to be Ella Mordaunt.

Full of these proper wishes and just resolves, he was preparing,—though not without trepidation, and all hope of being beloved having vanished from his mind,—for well does the bard say, “The lover is a man afraid,”—he was preparing to go to the box and pay his compliments to Ella, when a brother officer came hastily up to him, and begged him to go out with him instantly.—He did so ; and had the mortification to learn, that if he wished to prevent a duel between two hot-headed young men of his acquaintance, he must follow him instantly to the Bedford Arms. He did so ; and was detained there till it was too late to return to the theatre.

The next day, however, he resolved to make himself amends, and call on Ella ; and if he found her alone, and that she received him in a way that should encourage his hopes of her liking him in secret, he thought, yes, he was *sure* that he should declare his passion.—Accordingly he set off for Montagu Place ;—but he had the mortification of learning there that Miss Mordaunt, attended only by her servants had set off for Wales, being summoned thither by the illness of a friend.—“How unfortunate !” thought Colonel Vane ; “But I can inquire which road she took and *follow* her.—Yet, no—then I should commit myself—for what right could I have to follow her, unless I went on purpose to make her an offer of marriage ? And sad, disappointed, but still too cautious and undecided to end his anxieties at once he returned to his hotel, and Ella pursued her journey uninterrupted.

The two months that ensued were months of great

anxiety to Colonel Vane, for Ella did not write even to her friend, the betrothed wife of Captain Clinton ; and all that was known of her was, that she was in Wales—but that her servants were returned to Bower Wood ;—and all they could tell of their mistress was that her return was uncertain.—However, just as Colonel Vane's own regiment had been ordered to W——, and had marched in, Ella returned to Bower Wood and alone, but was almost immediately joined there by friends from London. Colonel Vane was not slow to pay his compliments to Ella on her arrival ; and if embarrassment of manner, and emotion too strong to be concealed, were requisite to convince him he might offer without fear of being refused, Ella's appearance when she first saw Colonel Vane was sufficient to lay every tender apprehension to rest, and encourage him to hope for all that he desired. But this embarrassment and this emotion did not seem to originate *merely* in the conscious feelings of a susceptible and attached woman ; her cheek kept varying from red to pale, from pale to red, and her manner changing from kindness to coldness, and from openness to sudden reserve, during the whole time that he remained at Bower Wood. However, when he took leave she cordially bade him consider himself as a welcome guest at her house, and fixed a day for his dining there.—“ Strange, uncertain, variable, but fascinating creature !” thought Colonel Vane as he left the house.—“ How unaccountable was her manner !—A painful, not a *pleasing* consciousness seemed to oppress her during my visit ; and she looked as if something weighed heavily on her mind.—What has she been so long about in Wales ? I wish I knew.”

I shall pass over the few succeeding weeks, and content myself with saying, that every day decreased Colonel Vane's distrust of Ella's capability to make him happy as a wife, and increased his admiration of her charms and her virtues ;—but he had not made up his mind to disclose the state of his heart to her, when Ella's friends proposed a voyage down the Wye, and Colonel Vane was asked to join the party. To a proposal so likely to

make him still more acquainted with the character of Ella he joyfully acceded; and as there was no other single man of the party, Ella without any design of his or hers, was left to his care; and she could without impropriety hang on his arm, and walk alone with him on the beautiful banks of the river, and along its wooded rocks, though such familiarity and distinction would in the streets of W—— have been wisely judged indecorous.—And while his heart was still more softened, still more attached by the endearing familiarity thus endured, and by the beauty of the surrounding scenery, Colonel Vane forgot he had ever hesitated, and was only withheld by the emotion and timidity of a lover from avowing his passion; when an accident threw him off his guard, and made an immediate avowal an act of duty and honor.—As Ella and Colonel Vane reached the boat on their return from viewing the ruins of Goodrich Castle, before the rest of the company, “Perhaps,” said Ella, “our friends are seeking us; you had better try to find them, while I sit in the boat.”—So saying without waiting for assistance, she attempted to enter it; but instead of putting her foot in, she put it against the boat, and by the suddenness with which it moved away she was precipitated head foremost into the river, and so near the boat, that her danger, but for immediate succor, would have been great. But Colonel Vane jumped in after her, and in a minute more she was safe on land, and much less alarmed than Colonel Vane himself.—Indeed his agitation resembled frenzy—he clasped her almost convulsively to his bosom, exclaiming, “dreadful! to see the water close once more over all that I most love on earth! But she is safe, I have rescued *her*.” Then bursting into tears, he hid his face in his hands, regardless who witnessed the expressions of his tenderness and his emotion; while the sad scene of his father’s death again lived in his remembrance. By this time the rest of the party arrived, and were full of consternation at seeing Ella and Colonel Vane’s wet and miserable condition—and not a little agitated when they learnt the cause.—But to obtain a

change of clothes where they were, seemed difficult if not impossible ; and as Ella professed that she felt no alarm lest she should take cold, they all entered the boat, and desired the boatmen to row as fast as they could to Monmouth. But not fast enough could they row for the alarmed feelings of Colonel Vane, whose apprehensions lest Ella should suffer from sitting so long in her wet garments took such entire possession of his mind, that his usual self command forsook him, and he could scarcely preserve his temper when his companions allowed their own attention to be called off from Ella by the still increasing beauty of the rocks on either side of them ; nay, he could scarcely refrain from quarrelling with Ella herself, when she endeavored, though vainly, to prevail on them all to stop and walk up, as is the custom, the very high, grand, and wooded rock called Symon's Yatt—urging the necessity of no time being lost if she wished to escape perhaps destruction.—But Ella had no fear, no painful feelings whatever, and perhaps the happy though fluttered state of her spirits might preserve her from the illness Colonel Vane dreaded for her ; for she now saw love triumphant over every other consciousness in the man whom she preferred to every other ; and she also saw, that after this public display of his tenderness, he was bound by every honorable principle to make a direct avowal of his wishes and intentions.—Her friends and companions felt the same necessity ; and being convinced that opportunity alone was now wanting for that purpose,—as soon as Ella and Colonel Vane had made a thorough change of raiment at Monmouth, and there was an excuse for leaving them together, the whole party contrived, for different reasons, to leave the room, and Colonel Vane no longer deferred the long meditated and long wished declaration.

But Ella's answer was not exactly all his heart demanded, though it was what his judgment *approved*. She frankly told him, that though her feelings were decidedly in his favor, her reason was not—because she knew that *his* reason had once most decidedly disap-

proved her manners, and she was fearful that the time might come when he might feel a return of his old prejudices, and wish he had not formed so hasty a connexion.—She therefore insisted that they should both remain unfettered by any engagement for six months to come, in order that, if either of them should in that time see cause to break off the connexion entirely, he or she might be at liberty to do so with perfect honor and propriety;—and to this condition Colonel Vane reluctantly assented.—In the meanwhile, Ella was to admit his visits as an approved though not entirely an accepted lover; and with judgments satisfied, but both with hearts discontented though relieved, they walked out in search of their friends, who saw on Ella's countenance an expression of cheerfulness to which it had been long a stranger, and were not slow to discover the cause of it.—Time now flew on rapid wings both to Ella and Colonel Vane; for, as she had always a proper chaperone staying with her, she was able to admit his frequent visits.—But in the midst of their happy prospects, and when confidence had replaced distrust in the mind of Colonel Vane, temptations to a relapse were thrown in his way, which, though his reason rejected, his feelings were unable entirely to resist.

He one day received an anonymous letter, which was as follows;

“Awake from your dream of confidence and bliss! Awake, Colonel Vane, at the voice of a sincere friend, and ponder over the following facts.

“Miss M—— went suddenly into Wales—the pretence to visit a dying friend, a relation. On entering the principality, she dismissed her servants,—and she returned in two months time, pale, thin, and dispirited.—Ever since, and even up to this very day, she has been in the habit of rising before six o'clock, and walking to a cottage two miles from Bower Wood, where she nurses and sometimes weeps over a beautiful infant with large *blue eyes* and long dark eye-lashes.—You and I have seen such eyes before.—Is such a woman worthy to be your wife?

No, Colonel V——. Slight not this necessary warning.—Awake, *inquire*, and act accordingly.

“A FRIEND TO THE BRAVE.”

“Vile scrawl! infamous calumny!” cried Colonel Vane in the first moments of receiving it,—and wiser in these moments than in the subsequent ones;—for in spite of that indignant disregard which every just, rational and honorable being ought to feel at anonymous slander, anonymous accusation,—every time he read the letter, and he read it often, he questioned more and more the possibility of any one’s daring to make such charges if wholly unfounded; and his reflections ended in a firm resolve to endeavor to ascertain first, whether it was true that her servants had been dismissed; and secondly, if she really rose early and walked before breakfast. Though he had not, he *believed*, the remotest idea that if there was a child at the cottage, that child was Ella’s,—yet was it not mean to act on information which might only be the result of malignity? Was it not a justice he owed Ella Mordaunt, to burn the letter and forget its unworthy contents? So reason, justice, and knowledge of the world advised; but the disposition of Colonel Vane was such as to render him incapable of listening wholly to these suggestions, and he resolved to proceed accordingly. But as soon as he saw Ella, and beheld the frank, ingenuous expression of pleasure which beamed in her eyes, and mantled on her cheek, when she welcomed him that evening to Bower Wood; he, even he, forgot all his suspicions, and gave himself up once more to the joy of loving and being beloved. The next day, however, as he stood admiring the prospect at the door of Bower Wood, after alighting from his horse, Ella’s old butler accosted him with “A fine prospect, sir.” “Yes,” replied Colonel Vane, “it is;” and then, (for the opportunity was irresistible) he added, “but you saw much finer in Wales, Jermyn, when you attended your mistress thither.”

“No, indeed, sir,” replied Jermyn; for we did not



go far with my mistress—she sent us home and went on alone.”

At this confirmation of the truth of one part of the anonymous letter Colonel Vane absolutely started, and entered the house in some perturbation of mind. Ella soon saw that something had disturbed him; but as she could not suspect the cause, she only thought it was a cloud that would soon blow over again. After other conversation he contrived to turn the conversation on Wales and its beauties; and glancing his eye on Ella, he observed her turn pale, and then red, in evident confusion.

“I think,” said he, “you were two months in Wales?”

“Yes.”

“In what part?”

“Oh, quite amongst the mountains—in a very sequestered spot.”

“But you walked and rode out to see prospects, I conclude?”

“No, very little—for I was chiefly confined to a sick bed, and—.” Here Ella’s voice faltered, and with tears in her eyes she left the room.

“What could excite this evident emotion?” thought Colonel Vane; “Why that conscious and alarmed look when I mentioned Wales? Why that cheek pale and red by turns?” And when Colonel Vane took leave of Ella that night, he was conscious of a degree of coldness in his manner, which he regretted, but could not alter.

But what did he suspect? Not that Ella had gone into Wales, as the letter hinted, to be confined, and had brought her infant to be nursed in her neighborhood. *No*, he was *sure* he did not suspect *that*; and he *certainly* would not go to the cottage to see if there was a child there with eyes and eyelashes like Ella’s; but he would, as he before resolved, discover whether she walked out alone early in the morning. He was however spared this inquiry; for a gentleman said to Ella in his presence,

“Surely, Miss Mordaunt, I have seen you twice this week on the road to D——, walking alone, at six o’clock in the morning?”

“Me! O,—yes—that is,—O,—yes, very likely,” replied Ella, pale, agitated, and very evidently shrinking from the inquiring eyes of Colonel Vane, which were fixed upon her.

“I thought it must be you by the form and air,” continued the gentleman; “and though I was going pheasant shooting, I would have stopped to have paid my compliments to you, but you vanished both times suddenly; and I thought I saw you go into a cottage in a field.”

“I *did* go into a cottage in a field,” replied Ella gravely, and in a voice nearly extinct with emotion; then turning to the person next her, she changed the conversation; and not long after, Colonel Vane, on pretence of wanting a ride for the good of his health, rang for his horse, and springing on it, set it into a full gallop, as if hoping to escape by speed from the necessity and the agony of thought. But he must at length terminate his gallop; and he must at last allow himself leisure for thought. What was this mystery concerning the cottage? And ought Ella in their present relative situation to have any concealments from him, or to be involved in any mystery?—He thought, and wisely thought, *not*,—for it was impossible for him to conceive of any circumstance sufficient to account for conduct at once detrimental to his peace and her own reputation. He returned, however, to Bower Wood to dinner; and when Ella, with the looks and accents of unsuspecting love, tenderly hoped he was better, and that the ride and the air had recovered him entirely, he tried, and for a while the trial succeeded, to banish all unpleasant ideas from his mind, and to believe her not only free from guilt, but in this instance free from error also. These happy feelings, however, were not doomed to last long. He found lying on his table a second letter in the same hand writing as the first; he opened it with a trembling hand, and found that it contained these words:

“Blind and incredulous man! I see that you still hesitate to believe my friendly information. Go then to the cottage at six o'clock any morning, and let your *own eyes* convince you of my truth. Why should an innocent

woman have a child under her care without your privity, and unknown even to her own servants? Think of *that*, master Ford."

By this quotation it should seem that the writer was acquainted with the jealous and suspicious nature of Colonel Vane; for Ford himself was not more apt to feelings of that nature, and never was there man on whom anonymous letters, the vilest agents of the vilest beings, were more likely to exert a most pernicious influence. "Yes, I will go," said Colonel Vane to himself. "I will see and judge for myself."—But a second and a third morning came, and still he went not, for, if he was deceived, the delusion was so dear, that he could almost have exclaimed, "And if I'm cheated, cheat me still!"

But a third letter came to whet his almost blunted purpose,—blunted latterly by this consideration,—"If she has a secret, what right have I to inquire into it against her will?" However, on the receipt of this *third* letter, he argued thus,—"What right has she, under our present circumstances, to have a secret of so suspicious a nature concealed from me?"

The letter was as follows:

"I have done with you—you are a *dupe*, and *deserve* to be one, and no one will pity you; for 'forewarned, forearmed,' says the proverb—but you despise warnings, and I must leave you to your fate."

The next morning after the receipt of this, Colonel Vane rose before six, and soon after that hour he was on the road to D——, while before him, at some distance, he saw a lady, who he was sure was Ella herself. Soon after he saw her with rapid step turn into a field, and, looking back as if fearful of being observed, he beheld her enter a cottage. So far was consistent with the statement in the letter. The next fact to be ascertained was, what the cottage contained, and fearful of discovering, yet resolved to discover, the truth, he walked hastily on, though forced to stop and take breath as he proceeded, emotion almost depriving him of his usual powers, till at length he reached that spot, pregnant with

the happiness or misery of his future life. The door was open; and casting a hasty glance forward, he saw Ella sitting with her back to the door, holding an infant in her lap, over which she seemed to be weeping while she caressed it, and as he gazed in breathless agitation he heard her say, "Poor unconscious child! poor Ella! thou didst cost thy mother dear indeed!" A deep sigh, and an exclamation of "Gracious Heaven!" which involuntarily escaped Colonel Vane, caused her to turn round; and starting from her seat, while she clasped the infant to her bosom, she stood looking on him in speechless silence; and with a lip pale and quivering as his own, at length she recollected herself sufficiently to ask what brought him thither at that early hour? mingling with her words an air of proud defiance, from the consciousness that he came probably as a spy upon her actions.

"*These* brought me hither," replied Colonel Vane, piqued at her manner and expression, and putting into her trembling hand the anonymous letters, darting at her at the same moment a look of indignant inquiry.

Ella hastily perused the base, calumnious pages. "So, sir," she answered, returning them with seeming calmness of manner, though her whole frame shook with indignant agony, and her lips were parched with agitation, while her air was one of haughty disdain—"So, sir, you came hither on the information of an anonymous correspondent!"

"Yes, madam, but a well informed one, it seems; for I have found all that these letters contain true."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed with almost wild emotion, for she remembered that the letter writer insinuated that she was the mother of the child whom she held in her arms. Colonel Vane answered not to the exclamation, but to the expression of her countenance, when he replied, "Yes, madam, yes, and I demand of you whose is that infant whom you are pressing to your bosom? Tell me, I conjure you, tell me."

"Never, never, sir," she returned, surveying him with a look of scorn unutterable. "But you *forget*, sir,"

she added with a sneer, "your anonymous friend has informed you whose child it is."

"Ella, dearest Ella," cried Colonel Vane, "for I do love you, I love you still, spite of——" Here he paused. But Ella's form and face relaxed not in their lofty carriage and expression, and he continued thus; "*Rack me not*, I conjure you, with this cold contemptuous silence; say but that you are innocent; say but that these scrawls are vile impostures."

"What! when you have yourself pronounced them true? What! condescend to assure the poor dupe of an anonymous slander that I am wronged and innocent? Never. You are welcome, sir, to believe what you please, and from this moment I desire that we may be strangers to each other; the terms of our engagement were such as to make a dissolution of it easy."

"Then be it so—and let us never meet again," replied Colonel Vane, enraged and indignant in his turn; "we never *will* meet again, and the *poor dupe* bids you an eternal adieu."

So saying, he rushed out of the cottage, and was out of sight in a moment, leaving Ella motionless, with her eyes fixed on the door through which he passed. But when she recovered herself, "Where is the child?" cried Ella. "In the cradle. Shall I bring it to you?" answered the woman. "No. Take it away, take her away I will not see it, lest I——." Here tears, friendly tears, came to her relief, and after giving way to them some considerable time, she was able to walk home with slow and faltering step. However, she pursued her course, every moment expecting to see Colonel Vane cross her path, and beg her to listen to him once more; for could he really have seen her for the last time, and bidden her farewell forever? No—it seemed impossible. But she reached home without encountering him, and even without seeing him at a distance; and as soon as she entered the house she stole into her own apartment, and, having undressed, went to bed. Then ringing for her maid, she told her she was unwell, and desired not to

be disturbed till she rang again. But it was not rest which she sought, for well she knew that rest must be a stranger to her eyes. She only wanted the still solitude of her bed, the friendly concealment of her closely drawn curtains to veil the eyes weighed down by tears, not sleep ; and to enable her, undisturbed by the look of pity or curiosity, to live over again the painful events of the last hour, and endeavor to act by the suggestions, if possible, of unprejudiced reflection. But what was the prominent image in her mind ? Her lover influenced by a base anonymous slanderer to suspect her of incontinence, and convinced of the truth of the slander by the evidence of his own senses ! And was the man who could thus suspect, and thus believe, deserving of her love, or capable of making her happy ? No, surely not ; and her indignant soul revolted at his influence, and resolved to shake it off for ever. But were not his suspicion and his belief excusable ? Had he not always disapproved her manners, and always on his own rigid principles been apprehensive of what such conduct might lead to ? And was not all that the letters pointed out true ? Had she not dismissed her servants on entering Wales ? Was there not a child at a cottage whom she visited clandestinely, caressed, and wept over ? and had not Colonel Vane, the man whom she loved, and meant to marry, and from whom, therefore, she ought to have had *apparently* no concealments, —had not he seen her caressing and weeping over this child, and stealing to her cradle when others were still wrapt in unconscious slumbers ? Would not *any* man have been startled at such coincidence ? and was it not, therefore, pardonable in a man of Colonel Vane's nature, and preconceived opinions, to believe her guilty, in the first transports of his surprise, and to act, especially when treated as she treated him, upon the impulse of his first impressions, and the result of first appearances ?

I am sure that there exists not a man or woman of an affectionate and generous nature, who would not much rather blame themselves, than blame the object of their esteem and tenderness ; and I am also sure that there

is no feeling so difficult to be borne, as the conscious degradation in one's esteem, of the object one has fondly adored.

Ella's nature was affectionate, was generous ; and as soon as she could succeed in exculpating her lover, and inculcating herself, much of her agony subsided, and her offended pride, her sense of injured innocence, lost considerable of their power to distress her. " I exhibited too much pride, too much bad temper," she said to herself,— " I should have considered the disposition of the man, and made allowances for it ; but he will *return*, at least I hope he will ; and then, painful and difficult, in my opinion and with my conviction, as the task will be, I will disclose the whole secret to him, and satisfy even the wildest of his jealous apprehensions ! " These thoughts, these soothing thoughts, though at first they fluctuated, at length became stationary and uppermost in the mind of Ella ; and at five o'clock she rose, dressed for dinner, and made her appearance at table. But her swelled eyelids, her pale cheek, and her abstracted air, would have been sufficient of themselves to convince her anxious friends that her illness was of the mind, not the body, had they not been informed by an officer who called at Bower Wood, that he had seen Colonel Vane looking very ill, and even agitated in air and manner, set off for London in the mail-coach that day at three, and that he had told him he did not know when he should return. With this sudden and unexpected departure the guests at Bower Wood feared that Ella's continuation in her own room was connected, and as soon as they beheld her they felt all their fears confirmed.

Ella however did not mention Colonel Vane, and she kept up her spirits, by the hope that she should either see him or hear from him before the evening ; but when nine o'clock arrived, and he neither came nor sent, her fortitude forsook her, and it was with difficulty she could attend to or answer any question proposed to her. Mrs Belmont, one of her guests, seeing her absence of mind, thought that it would relieve her mind, perhaps, were she

to have an opportunity given her of talking on the subject that oppressed her. Accordingly she said, "So Colonel Vane has deserted us today!"

"He has, indeed, I fear," replied Ella blushing, "I do not think he will come now."

"Come now!" cried Mr Belmont. "No, certainly not—surely you know that he is gone to London?"

"To London!" faintly exclaimed Ella falling back in her chair, and fixing her eyes wildly on Mr Belmont, who gave as succinctly as possible the intelligence he had received.—Without speaking, Ella immediately took a candle, and running out of the room did not stop till she once more reached her own apartment, and, locking herself in, gave way to the agony of her soul.—"Gone! gone *indeed!* perhaps never to return!" The idea was insupportable, and she passed the night in wretchedness easier to be imagined than described. But the next morning a short but refreshing slumber after day-break brought with it calmer feelings and more soothing thoughts. If Colonel Vane had ever loved her, and if he was the good and honorable man she thought him, he would write to her in a few days, or he would return; and as the sweetness of her temper, aided by her habitual piety and resignation, led her on *principle* to dwell on the *bright* rather than the *gloomy* side of her prospects, she arose resolved not to distress her companions by the indulgence of grief that it would give them pain to witness, and excite in them a fruitless, tormenting wish at the same time to remove.

Colonel Vane, meanwhile, was arrived in London, after a journey which, as he repented of it during the greatest part of the way, was therefore of the most painful and disagreeable nature. And what was he going to do in London? what had he gained by leaving W——? and what had he accomplished? He had contrived by so doing to give immediate publicity to his rupture with Ella, which, unless it was really to be eternal, had better not have been known at all. But was it, or was it not, an eternal rupture? Might she not explain every thing to his satisfaction, and forgive his suspicions?—No;—she had *her-*



*self* dismissed him, scornfully dismissed him, desiring never to see him *more*, and refusing to answer any interrogatories. And would not an innocent woman, proud and indignant under the sense of injury, have acted thus? But then could a guilty woman have acted otherwise? He did not know what to think; and so lost was he in his own reflections, that the mail coach had reached the inn yard, and his servant had asked him several times whether he would have a hackney coach called, before he recollected where he was, and was capable of giving orders. At length he found himself seated at breakfast at a coffee house, and had next to consider his future destination. But Ella and Bower Wood, the future happiness which he had expected, and the present which he had so recently enjoyed, were still and ever present to his imagination, and he found that he could do nothing and resolve on nothing till he had written to Ella.—As soon as he had formed this resolution his mind felt relieved, and his letter was such a one as must, had it reached the place of its destination, have had all the effect which he desired. He conjured her to make allowances for his disposition, and to consider how much appearances were against her,—to ask her own heart whether, in their circumstances, she was not to blame in having a secret unconfided to him?—and after professions of the fondest and most devoted attachment, he *conjured* her, if she still loved him, or if she had *ever* loved him, or if she had even common humanity, to write to him immediately, and explain away entirely, if she *could*,—and he did not doubt her ability to do so,—the causes of his distress, and the grounds of the anonymous accusation. If she did this, he would immediately return to W——, and they would jointly endeavor to find out his mischievous, but in some respects, only too well informed correspondent.

Having written this letter, on which, spite of all his manliness and all his efforts, a tear or two had fallen, Colonel Vane unfortunately gave it to his servant to put into the post office. This man happened, on his way

thither, to meet a former fellow servant whom he had not seen for some time, and was prevailed upon to go to a public house with him. The consequence was, that having been up all night on the top of a coach, he was very soon intoxicated; and the letter was forgotten; and that, after accompanying his companion to different ale houses, and reeling about the streets in almost unconscious inebriety, he did not reach the coffee house where his master had taken up his abode till four o'clock in the afternoon, and only just time enough to go to bed and sleep off the fumes of intoxication before the Colonel returned at eleven o'clock at night. Colonel Vane had wandered forth, he scarcely cared whither, till he found himself at Grosvenor gate, and was tempted by the fineness of the morning, a clear and frosty morning in January, to walk along the as yet lonely footpath on the side of the park. Uniformity of motion is certainly in unison with the sameness of incessant uneasiness on one subject, and Colonel Vane walked at least three hours at the same speed, backwards and forwards, on the same spot, unconscious of passing objects and of the lapse of time. At length, however, his attention was attracted by a gentleman, who, with his hat pulled over his eyes, was running rather than walking on the opposite path, and seemed like himself, for he too ran to and fro on the same spot, to be too much absorbed in his own feelings to attend to any thing external. The appearance of cheerfulness, if it had attracted, would not have fixed the attention of Colonel Vane at such a moment; but there was a something almost akin to madness in the restless gait of this man, that irresistibly drew and fixed the eyes of the Colonel upon him;—and almost involuntarily he left his own path and crossed him on his. He crossed so near him that the gentleman could not help starting, and as he did so their eyes met. The recognition was immediate and mutual, and Colonel Vane found that the person who had thus interested him was a Colonel Rivers, of the —— regiment, who had been his school fellow, whom he had ever esteemed, though circumstances had shaped their

course differently in life, and whom he was even delighted to see again. But his pleasure was soon damped; for Colonel Rivers wrung his hand in a sort of speechless agony, and burst into tears.

“Good heavens!” cried Colonel Vane, “my dear Rivers, what can this mean? Are *you*, too, unhappy?” It was some moments before Colonel Rivers could speak with sufficient composure to inform him that his wife whom he loved with the most devoted affection, had ever since her last lying in exhibited symptoms of a decline; that though she was not likely to recover she might linger many months; and that his regiment was then under sailing orders for the East Indies.

The afflicted generally imagine their own sorrows the most difficult to be borne, and are jealous of their supremacy in suffering. But Colonel Vane felt the difference of an affliction without hope, to one which hope alleviated; he also believed, when successive years had proved “the wife still dearer than the bride,” that the agony of eternal separation must excel every other species of anguish; and that Colonel Rivers’ farewell to his dying wife would exhibit the very acme of human trials.

“What can I say to you, my dear Rivers?” replied Colonel Vane affectionately pressing the arm he held, “I could tell you,

‘Each has his sufferings, all are men  
Condemn’d alike to groan;’

but I conceive that your trial is beyond that of most men—and I pity you from my soul.” There was nothing consolatory certainly in this speech, in one sense of the word; yet Colonel Rivers felt soothed by it, and still more by the tone and manner in which it was uttered. Here was a man who acknowledged the greatness of his misery, and who entered into, who understood his feelings!

“My dear Vane,” said Colonel Rivers, “what a comfort it is to me to have met you! If you can forgive the selfishness that dares invite you to the house of sickness

and of sorrow, perhaps you will spend the day with me?"

"Most gladly," replied Colonel Vane, while his friend little thought that at that moment the house of mourning had more charms for him than the house of gladness.

"My poor Sophia will be glad to see you, Vane," said Colonel Rivers, "she is better in an evening; indeed quite herself; but her nights are dreadful. I had not my clothes off last night, and sitting up had made me so chilly and uncomfortable, that I came to take a run in the park in order to warm and rouse myself, and also to combat painful feelings. You remember Sophia, Vane? 'T was soon after we married we saw you in town."

"Remember her! I do indeed; she is not a woman to be forgotten, Rivers; I thought her a pattern of female loveliness, mild, modest, delicate!—"

"And to think that I must lose her, Vane!"

"But is there *no* hope?"—and immediately Colonel Rivers, though professing that his hopes were over, convinced Colonel Vane, by the favorable symptoms he enumerated, that he did at times flatter himself that, at least if he could stay with her, she might struggle through. But the idea of his departure, and in order to go into a service of actual danger, if he survived the voyage, was more than her present weakness could bear up against, and the hour of his bidding her farewell would probably be the signal of her dissolution.

"Horrible!" exclaimed Colonel Vane with great emotion. "Spare me, dear Rivers, I cannot bear it!" And Colonel Vane did not speak again till they reached Colonel Rivers' house. He found his wife in a quiet sleep, the first of many days; and the feeling of hope which it excited, restored to him some of his usual cheerfulness; and he, though evidently Colonel Vane did not, enjoyed the hours which, no longer claimed by affectionate solicitude, were given to the enjoyments of friendly converse. But Rivers soon saw that his friend endured rather than relished conversation, and that his look was

that of abstraction; and as he had heard of his attachment and engagement, he feared, though he was too delicate to mention the subject, that Colonel Vane's unhappiness proceeded from that quarter.

Though Colonel Rivers talked of subjects quite foreign to his own distresses, he frequently recurred to them again, and he mentioned with great anguish his inability to negotiate an exchange which he had once hoped of doing; and as he said this, he saw almost with alarm a sort of wild expression pass over the countenance of Colonel Vane, while at the same time he started from his seat, and walked with rapid strides across the room. They were called at tea time to the dressing-room of the invalid, who, being informed that Colonel Vane was with her husband, earnestly desired to see him, and had caused herself to be dressed and seated in her great chair to await his visit.

Colonel Vane's heart beat with agitation, spite of himself, at the idea of seeing the woman whom he had last seen in all the pride of youth, beauty, and happiness, now struggling with a mortal disease, and agonizing that heart of which she had then been only the hope and the delight. But he saw little change in her appearance, the close dress of sickness hid its ravages,—it was her hand alone, thin, and nearly transparent, that betrayed her real situation, and contradicted the brilliancy of her color, and the lustre of her eyes.—Fever not only lighted up her features, but gave playfulness to her conversation; and she seemed, while approaching<sup>l</sup> apparently to the verge of death, like a bird of beautiful plumage hovering over a dark and deep abyss. While she was thus amusing herself by conversing, and *alarming* while she *entertained* her husband and his friend, who listened to her with 'fearful joy,' Colonel Rivers was called out of the room on business, and Colonel Vane left with the invalid.

"Come nearer to me," said she, "I wish to speak seriously to you. This is a sad business, Colonel Vane,—I mean my poor husband's not being able to effect an ex-

change ;—for it will be the death of me, I know, though I do not tell him so because it would distress him. I should get well if he could but stay and nurse me,—of that I am *sure* ; for ever since he got leave of absence, and came to me I have been so much better ! It is so different, you know, to be watched by eyes that love one, and to be waited upon by the hand of affection ! I protest that the medicines I have received from my poor William, have had more effect than any I took before he came, and the food which he cut for me has been more nourishing.—You smile, Colonel Vane, (he did smile, but it was with tears in his eyes,) but I assure you all this is *true*—and then I sleep better when I know he is near to watch my slumbers, and that my eyes when I awake will open on his.”

The egotism of the sick and the dying is as interesting in proportion as that of other people is wearisome and disgusting ; and Colonel Vane listened with respectful and affectionate attention to the incessant volubility of this amiable sufferer, while every word which she uttered relative to the exchange, and her assertion that her death would be the certain consequence of her husband's departure, sunk deep into his memory, laying up a store for future consideration.

“ Oh ! Colonel Vane,” continued Mrs Rivers, “ Rivers has been the very breath of life to me from my earliest days.—We have loved each other from childhood ! and I do not remember to have ever looked with complacency on any man's face but his, or known pleasure from the attention of any other of his sex.\* I never bought even a ribbon without consulting him ;—when present with me, I never saw any one but William ; when absent, his eye, like to the eye of the Deity, seemed still upon me ; and I never spoke, or looked, or acted, but as I fancied he would direct or approve.”

\* Qu'il est digne d'envie le sort de la femme qui peut avoir ainsi conserve la plus parfaite unite dans sa destinee, et n'emporte au tombeau qu'un souvenir ! c'est assez pour une vie.”

"Angelic woman!" cried Colonel Vane, kissing with a sort of reverence her meagre, burning hand, "would that I could have been loved thus!"

"Doubt not but you will be so loved," replied Mrs Rivers smiling, "if you have made a proper choice,—for so do all virtuous women love."

At this moment Colonel Rivers returned for a few minutes; and as Colonel Vane remarked the look of confiding and even exclusive tenderness which she gave him, his pity amounted to anguish at the thought that his friend must soon behold that look no more, and he was forced to turn to the window to conceal his emotion.—When he was again left alone with Mrs Rivers, for Colonel Rivers was forced to leave them for a few minutes more, he saw that the exultation of disease was over, and that it was succeeded by its languor and lowness.—"Oh, Colonel Vane!" said she, "remember, if love like ours has its pleasures, it has also its pangs! and think that in proportion to the happiness of our existence together, will be the agony of our parting.—O that parting! And to undergo it when I am certain, if William could but stay with me, he would save my life!"—As she said this, Colonel Rivers entered unperceived; and the agony into which her words threw him was so great, and gave birth to a scene so tender and so distressing, that Colonel Vane vowed within himself, if Ella's answer to his letter was not satisfactory, and did not prove beyond dispute that her happiness depended on a union with him, he would offer himself in exchange for his friend, and brave the united dangers of battle and of climate.—But he justly considered that he had no right to sport with the happiness of Ella, and that it was only as a free and disengaged man he could with propriety take the place of Colonel Rivers, and do all in his power to save from dissolution a union at once the object of his envy and admiration.

With these feelings, these convictions, and these resolves, he returned to his hotel. His servant was only just risen and dressed when he returned. "You put that letter into the post, I hope, James?" said Colonel Vane.

“ Letter, sir ! O dear, yes,—certainly, sir ;” was the answer ; but then and only then had James recollected there was such a letter ; and he felt first in one pocket, then in another ; but no letter was there, nor in his waist-coat pocket, nor in the bed, nor by the bedside ;—in short, the letter was lost, he knew not how ; or whether, before he was drunk, or while he was so, he had really put it into the post-office. If not, and if he really had dropped it in the street, he trusted that some one would pick it up and carry it to the office. But he flattered himself ; the letter remained where it was lost ; and as James was not honest enough to own his carelessness to his master, Colonel Vane kept wondering from day to day that Ella did not answer his letter ; while Ella was feeling equal wonder that he did not write. Yes, Ella from day to day was watching, vainly watching, for the arrival of the post ; and though with that absence of selfishness which distinguished her, she struggled to conceal her wretchedness from her guests, they easily perceived that her laugh was without mirth, and her smile was without serenity,

While Ella was thus a prey to unavailing anxiety, she received a summons from her lawyer to repair to London on business, as she was now of age, and her presence was necessary in order to sign some papers. The occupation of business and change of scene could not have occurred at a more fortunate moment ; and as Ella’s London guests were on the eve of returning to the metropolis, her journey was rendered as pleasant as it could be in her distressed state of mind by their protection and society ; and in London she might hope to hear or see something of Colonel Vane. Thither, therefore, she repaired full of anxious expectation, leaving strict orders to have all letters sent after her to the house of her solicitor. But from the first hour of her journey to the last, Ella, as long as there was light to distinguish objects, looked eagerly from the windows of the carriage, fancying every horseman was Colonel Vane, or that every chaise or mail coach contained him. She was under the same



delusion as she drove along the streets of the metropolis; her fancy pictured still the image which her eyes pined to behold, till the carriage stopped in Russell square, and she found herself welcomed by her solicitor and his family.

Colonel Vane during this time was as anxiously waiting the appearance of the general postman in the street of his hotel; but a fortnight had now elapsed, and he had nearly convinced himself Ella was silent because she could not, dared not tell the truth; in short, he construed her silence into a proof of guilt, and was resolved, as his life was of no value now to any one, that he would offer himself in the place of Colonel Rivers, and at every risk to his own life endeavor to save that of perhaps the *only* estimable wife (his mother excepted) whom he had ever known, and who was really seemingly better from, as she declared, the watchful attention of her husband.—“But I will not be hasty, I will wait a day or two longer; she may be ill!” and as this thought came over his mind, a flood of tenderness overwhelmed his soul, and he felt that to quit England and Ella perhaps for ever, was an effort beyond his power to make.—Colonel Rivers had now, by the advice of her physician, borne his drooping wife to the milder air of Devonshire; and Colonel Vane, deprived of their society, which enabled him to fly from the agonies of his mind, was now in the habit of going to the theatre in order to escape from himself—when lo! as he had once before done, he beheld the woman whose image was ever present to his thoughts, and whom he had so lately fondly fancied ill both in mind and body from his sudden desertion, comfortably seated in the dress-boxes, and surrounded by smiling women and attentive men! True, Ella looked pale, ill, and almost dejected; but her dress was studied and elegant, and the passing scenes on the stage seemed capable, when her companions allowed her to attend to them, of attracting her attention and beguiling her of a smile.—Could *he* attend? could *he* smile? No, no; he felt too acutely to be so easily stolen from himself!—But *she* felt noth-

ing ; and *she* could hasten to the metropolis for the purposes of amusement !

Thus unjustly did he judge of Ella from appearances which were as much against himself ; for, had she discovered him at the play, might she not as reasonably have attributed his journey to London, and his visit to the theatre, to the desire of entertainment and a love of pleasure ?

While he was thus thinking, and gazing on Ella the whole time with looks "more in sorrow than in anger," envying and hating at the same time a very handsome youth who was continually leaning down to speak to Ella, and evidently unconscious of the presence of any one but herself,—a young man whom he scarcely knew entered into conversation with him ; and, being vain of his knowledge of great people, was officiously pointing out the box of Lord this, and Lady such-an-one ; adding, "His lordship is a charming man, I have the honor to know him well ;"—or, "Her ladyship is the most delightful of women, and an example to her sex.—But there, Colonel Vane, in that box is a lady of a different description," pointing to the private box in which was Ella,—“that is a very fine woman, though somewhat passe both in face and reputation—Lady Harriet Bentham.”

"Lady Harriet Bentham !" exclaimed Colonel Vane, thrown off his guard ; "I protest so it is !"—And Ella was at the play with a Lady Harriet Bentham !

"Yes, sir," resumed the young man, "there is Lady Harriet, and with her Miss Mordaunt the great heiress, *as usual*."

"As usual, sir ?—What do you mean by that ?"

"Just what the words import, Colonel ;—that Miss Mordaunt is very frequently with Lady Harriet Bentham, whose husband's nephew, that pretty young man, is desperately in love with Miss Mordaunt ; and it has long been supposed it will be a match."

A dagger would have given less pain to Colonel Vane than this speech ;—but surely it could not be true ;—if

Ella had long known Lady Harriet, he must have heard her say so ;—or, perhaps, conscious that he would disapprove her having such an acquaintance, she concealed her knowledge of her carefully from him ; for she had proved that she *could* hide secrets from the man she professed to adore and meant to marry ! Alas ! when confidence is once destroyed between the lover and the mistress, the husband or the wife, it is incredible what impossible things they will not believe of each other, and never, never is confidence once weakened, to be restored to its primitive strength.

“ But are you *sure*, sir, that Miss Mordaunt is, or has been, much with Lady Harriet Bentham ? ”

“ Why, really, sir,” replied the young man *pertly*, piqued at having his knowledge in a certain way doubted, “ I think I *must* know, as I have the honor to be rather high in her ladyship’s good graces ; and at Malvern and at Cheltenham both, I have seen Miss Mordaunt I am sure, unless I am losing my memory, under Lady Harriet’s protection.”

Colonel Vane at hearing this started up and almost gasped for breath.—“ What ! ” said he to himself, “ and have I been on the point of marrying the companion, the protegee, the pupil probably, of Lady Harriet Bentham ? —Now then I can believe *any thing* ; and *now* I can with pleasure resign her to that grinning fool yonder ; for I would sooner perish than take for my wife the intimate of Lady Harriet Bentham.—No, no ; and her sight is become hateful to me.—One look more, and then, fascinating but destructive, fatal woman, farewell forever ! ”—He did gaze on her once more ; and making a great effort, he then rushed out of the box and returned to his hotel.

Who can calculate on the mischiefs resulting from the weak boastings of vanity, uttered by impudence and supported by falsehood ? Who can say to what degradation to oneself, or destruction to another, the indulgence of vanity may not lead ? It may only be weakness in the first instance ; in the second it may be vice.—This Mathews

only began with the paltry wish of raising himself in Colonel Vane's eyes, by showing that he was known to the noble and the fashionable ; but he ended in absolute falsehood, as soon as he fancied that knowledge questioned ;—for he never saw Miss Mordaunt with Lady Harriet either at Malvern or Cheltenham, though he had seen her there with Mrs Anne Mordaunt ; and the real fact was, that Ella had never till that evening beheld Lady Harriet. But who was this woman, with whom a man like Colonel Vane, nice and rigid in his ideas of propriety, would not allow his wife in any degree to associate ?—She was an earl's daughter, but the wife of a private gentleman ; and no woman ever perhaps practised more scrupulously the christian rule of "Do as you would be done by."

Mr Bentham was rich, therefore she married him ; he was weak and timid, therefore he indulged her ; he had his vices, and consequently from a principle of justice he pardoned hers ;—and as he well knew, that if he continued to live with her, even virtuous women of unblemished reputation would, for her rank's sake continue to do the same, he obligingly resolved to take all her conduct in good part ; for the countenance of a husband to a wife is like the cover of a secretary of state, and franks any rubbish through the post office of society that stands in need of its assistance.

Lady Harriet acted up to the holy principle I have before mentioned, by showing to the tender weaknesses of other women that indulgence which she required for her own. Hence her house, a house consisting of various apartments, was always at the service of her friends, whether for the single tête-à-tête, or the supper consisting of many tête-à-têtes, or understood arrangements, or the busy crowd so favorable to conscious lovers, or the dinner, to present admiring strangers to each other and facilitate the means of more intimate and frequent meetings.—*Amiable* benevolence ! generous consideration for the kind hearted of both sexes ! But Colonel Vane was not of a humor to regard this virtue in Lady Harriet

with any thing like complacency ; and while he reflected on her convenient friendship, and still more convenient mansion, one cannot blame him for thinking with aversion of marrying the protegee of Lady Harriet, and for feeling the warning in the anonymous letters as being in reality the warning of a friend.—He walked to his hotel in agonies that almost deprived him of the power of exertion ; while the contemptible being who had occasioned them was saying to some of his acquaintance who entered the box where he sat, it was pity they had not come sooner, that he might have presented them to his friend the celebrated Colonel Vane, who was just gone.

After a night of anguish, yet of firm, well founded resolves, Colonel Vane arose very late in the day, determined to write to Ella once more ; and, in bidding her a last farewell, conjure her, if she wished to keep only the remnant of reputation, to break off all acquaintance with Lady Harriet Bentham. And while preparing to put his design in execution, the post brought him a letter from Colonel Rivers, written in a state nearly of distraction ;—for it informed him the purser was already gone to Portsmouth, and he was on the eve of murdering his adored wife by bidding her a last adieu !—“Not so, Rivers, not so !” exclaimed Colonel Vane nearly choked by emotion. “I will go—yes, I *will* go to the War office this instant ;” and he immediately set off. As he passed through Bond street the carriage of Lady Harriet Bentham passed him, and in it he beheld her Ladyship, Ella, and the nephew of Mr Bentham ; the latter listening with a blushing cheek, downcast eye, and pleased expression of countenance, as he thought, to this supposed rival. “It is enough, it is enough,” said he to himself. “No no—I have no regrets *now*, and welcome India, welcome years of banishment !”

He went to the War-office, preferred his petition to take the place of Colonel Rivers, and it was willingly accepted. As soon as the business was settled, Colonel Vane ordered a postchaise and four, and travelling all night arrived at Sidmouth late the next day. But late

as it was, he would not, since he had such good news to communicate, delay seeing Colonel Rivers till morning. He therefore instantly repaired to his lodgings, endeavoring to forget the misery he had experienced on the road, in the benevolent pleasure which he felt that moment, and to lose all sense of his own blighted prospects in the revived ones of his friend and his truly valuable wife. When he applied at the tied-up knocker to the door, he felt almost choked with emotion ; but that Mrs Rivers still survived he learnt, or fancied he might conclude, from the knocker's being still muffled. If so he came perhaps to save her life, at least to lengthen it ; and it was in a scarcely audible voice that he inquired whether Colonel Rivers was at home.

" He is, sir," replied the servant with tears in his eyes, " but he can see no one ; for he goes to Portsmouth tomorrow, and we fear my poor mistress will hardly survive his going."

" I must see him, however ; and I am sure he will see me," replied Colonel Vane in a voice scarcely articulate. " Tell him his friend Colonel Vane is here."

The man replied by a look of incredulity, but immediately went to his master.

As soon as Colonel Rivers heard who was below, he came down to welcome him. " My dear Vane," said he, " this is kind ; I know you come to support in her great trial my poor dying——." He could say no more, while Colonel Vane had wrung his hand, had suppressed his rising sobs innumerable times, before he could articulate one word, though that word was to raise Colonel Rivers from despondency to hope, from positive misery to comparative happiness. At length, however, he said, " No, Rivers, I am not come for the purpose you mention—for your wife has no such trial to undergo. I come to tell you that I have procured an exchange for you, and your substitute sets off tomorrow morning, in your place, for Portsmouth !"

Colonel Rivers was for a moment too much overwhelmed to be able to speak, as much overcome by joy

as he was before by sorrow ; but when he could speak, he could hardly find words strong enough to thank Colonel Vane for the great trouble which he knew he must have taken to do him so great and difficult a service. "And now, then," added he, "you must do me another—you must break the glad tidings to Sophia ; for I am too much agitated to do it, and should alarm her." He then led the way ; while Colonel Vane joyfully anticipated the gratification, a gratification for which he had paid very dear, of witnessing the happiness which he had done so much to insure.

"Sophia," said Colonel Rivers, "here is our friend Vane, our best friend, our friend indeed !" Mrs Rivers raised her head, and, fixing her dim eyes on Colonel Rivers, replied, "Why did you leave me ? I can ill spare you one moment of the few that remain for me, even to Colonel Vane."

"You hear her !" cried Colonel Rivers, and rushed out of the room.

"There, now he is gone again !" exclaimed Mrs Rivers ; it is very cruel in him ; for you know, Colonel Vane, we are to part tomorrow for ever !"

"I hope not, I trust not ! I am *sure* not," replied Colonel Vane, taking her moist hand in his, "I trust you will pass many happy years together yet." Mrs Rivers turned her large expressive eyes on him as he spoke, as if to reproach him with mockery of her situation. Colonel Vane could not endure the look ; and leaning his head against the side of her chair, "Forgive me," he said, "but emotion, emotion of a most pleasant nature, overcomes me. Mrs Rivers, you have as yet borne up against affliction ; can you, do you think, support the emotions of joy ?"

"Joy !" she answered, seizing his arm and gazing on him as if she would read his soul, "Joy ! can there be any joy for me now ? Did I not tell you he was to leave me tomorrow ?"

"But suppose he is not to leave you for days, or weeks, or perhaps months ?"

“And is it so?” she exclaimed with a scream of exultation.

“Yes,—an exchange has been effected, and *I* go instead of him to India!”

It was impossible for nature, weakened as hers had been, to support this sudden and overwhelming joy; and when Colonel Rivers re-entered the room, on Colonel Vane’s calling for help, he found his wife, fainted in Colonel Vane’s arms. But life was not long suspended, she revived to meet those eyes of love fixed on her, which she feared she was soon to meet no more; and in a transport of holy joy and gratitude, if I may so apply the term, this woman, whose eyes had never rested on any man but her husband, or seen any one beside him in the creation, now threw her arm round the neck of Colonel Vane, and pressed her tearful cheek to his.

“Rivers,” said she, “how can we thank him?”

“No better than by letting him witness the happiness he has conferred.”

“But oh! to think that *he* must leave us so soon, and go where he is going!”

“What is all this?” replied Colonel Rivers; “you surely will stay with us a few days!”

“How can I? The purser is on board, and I must go at dawn; for it is *I* who go instead of *you* Rivers!”

I will not lengthen my story unnecessarily by describing what Colonel Rivers felt and said, nor how little the unhappy disappointment which Colonel Vane had met with, and which he honestly confessed made all-scenes alike to him, was able to reconcile him to the idea that for his sake Colonel Vane was going to encounter danger in various shapes, and that his happiness was purchased at so dear a rate.

But Colonel Vane’s departure would probably save his beloved wife, and she was certainly dearer than his benefactor.

“But to business, Rivers,” said Colonel Vane; “I shall leave you a list of the things I shall want to be sent after me; and your outfit of linen, &c. as we are almost



of the same size, will serve me on the voyage." To be brief;—at dawn Colonel Vane set off on his journey, with a mind supported and cheered by a consciousness of the good he had probably secured to two most amiable beings, and followed by their blessings and their prayers; while still the look of comfort and quiet, which beamed on him from the eyes of Mrs Rivers even through the tears she shed when she took leave of him, haunted his imagination as he travelled, bright and cheering to his lonely and melancholy way, as a sunbeam to the wanderer over the trackless waste. Too wretched for repose, too restless for a moment's delay, Colonel Vane stopped not till he reached Portsmouth. He went immediately on board, and tried in the novelty of the scene around him to forget the misery that occasioned him to be there.

But to return to Ella, and to explain why she was at the play with Lady Harriet Bentham. Mrs Rushbrooke, the wife of Ella's solicitor, a most respectable lawyer, was, in her way, as respectable as her husband—with the single drawback of coveting what she could not attain, viz. general and easy intercourse with persons of high rank and fashion. But she sometimes contrived to pick up a few stray lords and ladies as she perambulated the gay scenes of a crowded assembly, who, having no objection to grace a table filled with choice dishes and fine wines, were contented to be on the visiting list of Mrs Rushbrooke, and admitted her in return to their *sweeps* once a year. Some of these titled guests were, though of high rank, not of high fashion, and were thinly scattered in Mrs Rushbrooke's assemblies, like pine apples in a dessert, too rare and precious to be had in profusion, and, like pine apples, were sometimes a little decayed at the core. But they looked well, and what was better, their titles sounded well; and Mrs Rushbrooke considered nothing else. Still it would have been rather wonderful that Lady Harriet Bentham should become Mrs Rushbrooke's guest, and take her with her to her private box at the opera and playhouse, as Lady Harriet was not only a woman of high rank, but of the first order of fashion, if it had

not been generally known, first, that the lady was poor, and Mrs Rushbrooke's purse was plenteously supplied by her husband ; secondly, that Mr Rushbrooke had a nephew who was coming forward at the Bar, whose talents, person, and manners were such as to make him a favorite in that great world where his uncle's wife vainly wished to shine. But young Rushbrooke had pride ; and Lady Harriet soon discovered, that one way to secure the affections of Rushbrooke would be to give consequence to his relations in his eyes, and that of a certain set, by giving them an entree into fashionable life ; and Mrs Rushbrooke, too happy to be called upon, and visited, and taken into public by such a woman, to be nice with respect to the character of her patroness, eagerly accepted the proffered notice.—Nor did Mrs Rushbrooke at all suspect the  *motive* of Lady Harriet's advance ; for this her self-love forbade ; and as she saw nothing reprehensible in the manners of Lady Harriet, she soon convinced herself that the world had blamed her unjustly, and therefore did not scruple to present Ella to her noble friend, and request her to chaperone the young heiress to the play ; a proposal which was excessively acceptable to Lady Harriet, as she knew her husband's nephew admired Ella, and that her husband wished him to pay his addresses to her. To Ella, Lady Harriet and her character were equally unknown. Slander of every kind always was slow in its approach to Ella's door ; for it knew that it was difficult to gain admittance there. Born of an ancient family, and possessed of great wealth, she was too conscious of her own importance in the scale of society, to suppose she could derive consequence from an appearance of knowledge of great people, and tales of fashionable frailties, even if such knowledge had not been disgusting to her. And when compelled to credit such tales, she would observe, that even in that line of life, so much more exposed to temptations than our own, it was the few, not the many, who brought themselves into notice by their vices—vices, which the rank of the offenders made peculiarly conspicuous—for in all

ranks of life she knew that the *many*, of both sexes, go on quietly in the common routine of their duties, equally unknown to public censure and public praise. She therefore thought, that to stigmatize the whole of the nobility as profligate, because some of them stood forth conspicuous for their profligacy, was as just as it would be to pronounce that country wholly deficient in entire, habitable, and respectable mansions, in which a few ruined edifices forced themselves on the eye, rendered prominent and remarkable by being on an elevated situation.

It was not likely, therefore, that a woman of this character should be familiar with the errors of a Lady Harriet Bentham. But it is very certain that, had she known them, she would have declined the honor of being chaperoned by her ladyship, from a most Gothic idea of hers, that it would be no honor at all; and that to be a hanger-on of titled profligacy, however high its fashion, was beneath a virtuous and respectable woman. "The poor may be held in the iron fetters of necessity, but the rich are dragged behind the car of fashion by the golden chains of vanity."\*

But thus fatally, as we have seen above, did the dirty vanity of a contemptible being operate on the mind of a rash and jealous one, to the prejudice and misery of an honorable and innocent woman, and to the destruction of the happiness of two of his fellow-creatures; though it is only too true, that as Ella was seen in company at the play with a woman of suspicious character, "appearances were against her," at least in the eyes of Colonel Vane.

The day but one after Ella had visited the theatre, she returned to Bower Wood, as business no longer required her presence in London; for she saw no likelihood of seeing Colonel Vane there; and if she was ever to be so happy as to receive a letter from him, she wished to be where she could give way to her anxiety, and indulge her expectations of hearing from him, unwatched by the

\* See *Tales of Fashionable Life*.

eye either of curiosity or compassion ; and at her own home only, which she determined for a short time should be a solitary one, could she indulge her feelings without indelicacy and without restraint. Thither, therefore, she was most anxious to return ; for as Captain Clinton and her friend, who was now become his wife, were, unfortunately for Ella, stationed at Guernsey, she could not have their society, which would have been a great relief to her mind, and she consequently preferred having none at all. As soon as she reached home, her first inquiry was whether some letters or letter had not arrived, which through mistake or neglect had not been forwarded to her ;—and when she learnt that no letter had reached Bower Wood, she felt a sad and oppressive sickness of the heart, to which it is not in the power of words to do justice. But against the subduing power of this feeling she was able to struggle, and she did struggle successfully, forcing herself to drive out every day, and showing herself as usual in the streets of W——, that she might not be denominated a poor love-lorn, disappointed damsel, as the sudden departure and absence of Colonel Vane must have excited, she well knew, the curious and gossiping spirit of a town like W——. But Ella had not resolution to go out till after the delivery of letters ; and till her servant returned from the post, she used to walk backwards and forwards in a parlor which overlooked the back gate, that she might discover his approach as early as possible, and lose not a moment to ascertain the result of his inquiries. These inquiries, however, still continued unavailing ; but at length came a letter from Mr Belmont, which ended thus ;—“ Mr Belmont and myself were, as you will suppose, excessively astonished to hear of Colonel Vane’s having sailed for the East Indies ; but you, probably, have long known of his intentions ;—I see by the papers that he has sailed some days.”

The sudden desertion and the cruel protracted silence of Colonel Vane were circumstances which it had required all her fortitude to bear up against, even when

cheered by a hope, however faint, that she might see him again;—but now, when she recollected that day after day, week after week, month after month, nay year after year, she should no more behold that face, or listen to that voice, which not to see and not to hear during a few short hours had so lately, so very lately, been to her a source of tender regret and a most painful privation, she loathed the sight of day, as it would not be gladdened by his presence; and the night was equally unwelcome, as it would no longer be precursor of the morning that would restore him to her sight. Still mixed with the agonies of affectionate regret were the suggestions of offended pride, and the consciousness of unmerited and unfeeling neglect. Nay, his conduct in not writing to her since his departure, especially before he sailed, and in order to make known to her his intentions, was such as, even in her partial eyes, to detract excessively from the amiableness of his character, and to make her reluctantly acknowledge to herself, that with a man of his disposition she could have had little chance for happiness. But still she loved him, passionately loved him; and when she thought of the dangers which probably awaited him, her heart died within her, and she could scarcely resist her inclination to give way to the inactivity of despondence, and allow it to blight all the prospects of her youth, and chill all the energies of her soul. But a letter from Mrs Belmont roused her a little from the state into which she was falling. That lady had seen Colonel Rivers, who had given her a detailed account, which she transmitted to Ella, of his rencontre with Colonel Vane in the Park, and of his having been induced by compassion for him and his wife, added to the effect of his own disappointment, to take his place and abandon his native country, he having been, as he hinted to his friend, dismissed by the lady to whom he was engaged. Colonel Rivers added, that Colonel Vane's kindness had not been ineffectual,—that his beloved wife had mended daily when her peace of mind had been restored by the certainty of not losing his society, and that at length her dis-

ease had proved not a decline, but a vomica ; and that, an abscess having burst on her lungs, she had recovered so much strength since her tranquillity was restored, as to be able to live through the consequent weakness, and would soon follow him by slow stages to W——, whither he was going in order to supply the place of Colonel Vane. "As I find by this account," added Mrs Belmont, "*that you had dismissed Colonel Vane*, a circumstance I was before ignorant of, I thought it possible you might not be acquainted with the above detail, and therefore I have given it to you."

"Strange, inexplicable, inconsistent man! to feel so much for others, and so little for me!" exclaimed Ella when she read the letter. "Did he suppose I had not my feelings as well as Mrs Rivers, and that I should not suffer on the departure for India and its dangers, of that being with whom I had so lately expected to pass my life? Well, if he could so soon and so easily resign me, regardless of what I might suffer, or fancying me too callous for suffering, it is fit that I should listen to the suggestions of pride, not tenderness, and scorn to waste in the gloomy indolence of disappointed passion, those powers which were given me to be of use and service to my friends and fellow-creatures. I thank him, however, for his delicacy in simply stating that I had dismissed him, and not the cause of the anger which produced the dismissal; though no one but a man willing to be discarded would have acquiesced under a sentence evidently the result of pique and passion."

The arrival of Colonel Rivers and his interesting wife was expected by Ella with mixed pain and pleasure; but a termination was soon put to this agitation; for Mrs Rivers had a relapse, which, though a slight one, so much alarmed her husband that he obtained a longer leave of absence, and resolved to remain in Devonshire till the summer months.

But the time now arrived which was to restore Colonel Vane to the undiminished esteem as well as love of Ella, and to substitute the yearnings of affectionate regret and

the illusions of hope for the angry whisper of offended pride, and the complainings of outraged and despondent feelings. The letter which Colonel Vane wrote to her the day he reached London, and which was lost by his servant, had fallen out of his coat pocket on an old tattered sofa which stood in the chamber that the man occupied at the coffee-house, and had insinuated itself into a slit of the sofa case, under which it had completely disappeared; and there it remained till the case was taken off for some purpose or other, on which occasion it was discovered uninjured, though much dirtied. Luckily, also, the servant who found it remembered the search for a letter which Colonel Vane's valet had made; in consequence of which the master of the coffee-house forwarded the recovered treasure according to the direction, enclosing it in an envelope, in which he stated all he knew concerning it. As soon as the agitated but delighted Ella received and read the letter, all the mystery of Colonel Vane's conduct disappeared, and all its cruelty vanished. She understood, and she excused his not writing a second time, as this his first letter remained unanswered; and she could readily conceive how easily a man of his character was led by pique and disappointment united to a better inducement, the hope of saving and serving two amiable fellow creatures, to take the step which had plunged her into so much misery; and while in the triumphs of her joy, at finding Colonel Vane innocent of the fault which she had imputed to him, she had mentally resolved to write to him, to excuse her apparent neglect, and then pass the term of his absence, whatever it might be, in utter seclusion, she received another letter from Colonel Vane, dated off St Helen's, which though it excited in her the greatest astonishment and indignation, was welcome as a proof how tenderly he still loved, and how fondly he regretted her,—though as he declared, he would never have married the *friend and companion of Lady Harriet Bentham*.—This letter was long, and contained a description of all his feelings since they parted. It told her how painfully his returning ten-

derness towards her had been chilled by seeing her at the play with Lady Harriet Bentham, and by learning that she had not only frequently been her companion in public, but was also her friend in private ;—that thus frustrated in his hope, or even in his wish, to renew his engagement with her, he had resolved to quit England in pursuit of danger, and in all probability of death !—But that he could not rest without conjuring her with his parting breath, if she ever hoped to form a respectable connexion, to give up the society of Lady Harriet Bentham ; as he was sure that no man worthy her acceptance would ever marry the friend and associate of so depraved a woman !

I will not attempt to describe the conflict of various emotions which agitated Ella while she read this letter, of unfounded charges ; and learnt that the busy lies of a stranger and the indiscretion of Mrs Rnshbrooke had in a few short moments rendered her lover a self-banished man, and doomed her perhaps for years if not for ever, to all the lingerings of anxious and disappointed affection ! But superior to every other sensation was the dear consciousness that she was still beloved, and Colonel Vane guiltless of the faults she had attributed to him. “ And when I shall write to him,” she said to herself, “ as I will do, a complete exculpation of myself in every particular ; yes, then, even spite of distance and of absence, I shall, I am sure I shall, be comparatively happy !” In the meanwhile she resolved to lay a plan for her future life, and endeavor to find out a proper companion to reside with her. She also resolved to leave Bower Wood, as W—— and its society were become disagreeable to her ; and determined, as the existence of the little Ella and its abode near her were discovered, to take her at once into the house under her acknowledged protection, and watch over her education with all a mother’s care.

The neighborhood and society of W—— were indeed grown disagreeable to Ella, from a consciousness that she had in it a secret enemy ; and, as is always the mis-



chievous consequence of anonymous letters, she looked around her with distrust and suspicion, and very often, perhaps, fancied an innocent person guilty of the base scrawls that had been the means of blasting her hopes of happiness, and driving her lover from his native land into scenes of danger, and possibly of destruction. Besides, she was well aware that the circumstances of her having a child under her care, whose parents were unknown, and who strongly resembled her in its deep blue eyes, and the length and dark color of its eyelashes, must call forth a number of degrading suspicions concerning her conduct, as also her journey into Wales, unattended by her servants; and it was clear from the anonymous letters, that this latter circumstance was as well known as the existence of the child. But it was not in her power to clear up the mystery; therefore she felt uncomfortable at the idea of living amongst those, who, though they continued to visit her because she lived in a fine house and gave splendid entertainments, would very likely have dropped her acquaintance had she been less favored by fortune and by birth; and her departure to Bower Wood was finally resolved upon.

The house at Bower Wood was a modern one; that on her estate at Briardale was an ancient and Gothic mansion, and had about it a degree of melancholy grandeur, which better suited the now pensive cast of her mind; besides, every thing at the former residence painfully reminded her of Colonel Vane; and having let that place very advantageously for a term of years, she repaired with great alacrity to take possession of her new abode, and to be restored to the society of a lady who was married to the rector, and lived in the village; and who, in the beginning of her life, used to assist her aunt in her education. But a surprise awaited her at Briardale, which she scarcely knew whether to denominate painful or pleasing to her, though at last she considered it as deserving of the latter epithet. She discovered that Mrs Vane, mother of Colonel Vane, had lately hired and was come to reside in the manor house, which was

within two miles of her own; and thus, if ever Colonel Vane should return, he would find her conduct had been during his absence continually exposed to the eye of his mother! whose censure she was at least sure of never deserving, though she was fearful that, if she knew her to be the cause of her son's leaving his country, Mrs Vane might never bestow on her her regard and approbation. But I will ask Mrs Elmsley's opinion, said Ella to herself. Accordingly, as soon as she had a fair opportunity, she asked her friend whether she thought it likely that Mrs Vane would ever regard her with complacency, and be willing to visit her, since it was the dissolution of his engagement with her which occasioned Colonel Vane to leave England; "for though," added Ella, "Mrs Vane has never treated her son with the usual tenderness of a mother, and avoided rather than courted his society, still she may be very willing to resent the conduct of another towards him; if she fancies that conduct to have been injurious."

"True," replied Mrs Elmsley, "for that, alas! is human nature; but, strange as it may seem to you, I do not think there is any fear of Mrs Vane's being prejudiced against you; for I am convinced she was, till you came hither, quite ignorant of your name."

"Impossible! for I know that Colonel Vane wrote to inform her of his probable marriage."

"No doubt; but he either never mentioned the name of the lady, or she has forgotten it; for she was at our house when you drove past in your barouche and four, with two outriders; and when she asked your name, and whether you were not the lady who was expected to reside at the long empty house in the park, she neither started, nor looked grave, nor inquisitive, when I told her who you were; and I am convinced she has with your name no unpleasant association, except that, as she is very proud, I believe, and likes the pomp and circumstance of wealth herself, she may have a feeling of jealousy of the style in which you made your *entree*."

"I wish you may be right; but do you think she will call on me?"

"I fear not, as she keeps no company, and visits no where but at the rectory ; however, I will invite you to meet her, and trust to your usual power of fascination to make her your friend."

The next day was Sunday ; and as Mrs Vane was regular in her attendance at church, Ella arose almost certain of seeing this, to her, formidable woman ; and knowing that, unless she went early, she should feel embarrassed in going up the aisle, from the idea that she was observed by this dreaded censor, she drove to church before the usual time, and before any of the congregation were assembled. Ella felt almost ashamed of this weakness ; yet who could wonder that the mother of her lover was an object of interest and alarm to her !

"She is very late," thought Ella,—when lo ! a footman, in an old-fashioned rich livery with long tags on his shoulders, made way at the door for a tall majestic woman of a certain age, dressed in black, who appeared leaning on the arm of another footman, while the first who had appeared fell back, and walked behind her up the aisle, carrying a large prayer book.

"This then," thought Ella, as with some effort she looked over the side of the pew, is the woman I long but dread to see ! " But judge of her trepidation when the footman opened the door of the pew where Ella sat, and Mrs Vane entered it ! The truth was, the rain having come through the roof into the pew belonging to Ella, it had been judged right that, till the damage done to it could be repaired, she, as being a new comer, and a great lady, as well as Mrs Vane, was to be shown into Mrs Vane's seat."

Ella rose involuntarily on Mrs Vane's entrance, but could hardly keep her feet when with a look of almost haughty surprise Mrs Vane surveyed the unexpected intruder, and Ella saw in the still fine face of the mother, the dark and penetrating eyes of the son. Abashed, conscious, and rapidly changing color, as she often did, she resolved to apologize for her intrusion, since she now suspected it to be such, as soon as Mrs Vane had ended

her prayer. But that Lady, flattered as Louis the XIVth was said to be by causing embarrassment and emotion by the conscious power of his eye and dignity of his mein, seemed by a courteous wave of her hand, and bow of her head, to assure Ella that she was welcome, and to deprecate apologies; at this moment the service began, and all intercourse between them was suspended by devotion and decorum. But never had Ella before, in the presence of her Creator, felt so painfully affected by the presence of a fellow-creature; and for the first time in her life her thoughts wandered from their usual place of rest, and tears filled those eyes, which, hidden from human observation, were usually lifted in aid of silent or gently murmured prayer. However, she drew her veil over her face, and her emotion was known only to herself. When service was ended, the timid bashful manner in which Ella returned Mrs Vane's low and stately curtsy had an unlooked-for charm for the latter, who had expected to see in the rich and admired heiress, a dashing, undaunted, consequential young woman; and when in a voice whose sweetness we have mentioned before, she faltered out a hope that she had not intruded, and an assurance that she had concluded the seat was her own, Mrs Vane replied in language so obliging, and with a smile and countenance so like her son's, that Ella could scarcely control her feelings; and she was very glad when Mrs Elmsley came up to them, and drew Mrs Vane's attention on herself.

Mrs Elmsley soon saw by Mrs Vane's manner and expression that she was pleased with her young friend, and instantly took advantage of this favorable moment to present Ella to her, who was as unable as Mrs Elmsley to discover indication in Mrs Vane's look that her *name* was known to her associated with any painful consciousness.

So far all was right; and Ella went home conscious that her most immediate object in life, and her dearest wish, were now the prospect of becoming acquainted with Mrs Vane, and making her her friend. The next day she went to drink tea at the rectory to meet Mrs

Vane ; and at the close of the visit, which seemed satisfactory to both the guests, Ella was so fortunate as to be able to do Mrs Vane a kindness. That lady's carriage having been overturned as it was coming for her, and too much injured to proceed, she was willing, being lame and corpulent, to be prevented walking home, and was contented therefore to suffer Ella to set her down at her own door. As she took her leave, Ella, with as much respect as if she had been addressing a queen, hinted a hope of being allowed to pay her respects at the manor house.

"It is *my* duty to call on *you*," replied Mrs Vane with quickness ; "but I am a bad visiter, and go rarely from home."

"Without waiting for that ceremony, I should be only too proud to pay my respects to you, madam," said Ella ; and the next day she left her card at the door. Thus was, she flattered herself, a foundation laid for acquaintance, especially as she learnt from Mrs Elmsley that Mrs Vane was quite charmed both with her person and her manners ; and a circumstance only too soon occurred which made Ella rejoice that she had waved etiquette, and courted thus openly the acquaintance of this melancholy but respectable woman.

I have before said that the fortune which had been left to Mrs Vane by a relation, was personal property, and this money she had entrusted entirely to the care of an eminent banker and intimate friend, the partner in a well-accredited house. But unforeseen events in the commercial world shook the credit of this house to its foundation ; and in order to stop an alarming run on the bank, Mrs Vane's friend, hoping to replace the money in a few days, ventured to use her property. But the ruin was too complete to be avoided ; and a very few days afterwards witnessed the utter destruction of the firm in question, and the total ruin of Mrs Vane's fortune ; for nothing remained to her but a trifling sum settled on her by her husband, and which she brought him in marriage ! Whatever Mrs Vane might feel on this disastrous event, Ella's sensations were of a nature as painful, for she at

first experienced the pangs of self-condemnation. "But for me," she exclaimed in agony, "her son would have been here, and his wealth would immediately have removed her poverty; however, as soon as this news reaches him, he, I am well convinced, will do even more than duty requires."

The proud are so apt to be rendered prouder by affliction, that Ella foresaw an intimacy with Mrs Vane was now more unlikely than ever. True, having experienced the greatest of all losses, that of a husband whom she adored, Mrs Vane could not, as she told Mrs Elmsley, feel very acutely the loss of wealth; but then she was lame, in delicate health, and wanted a great deal of attendance, besides those little comforts and luxuries which sickness requires, and wealth can only bestow; and these she saw herself obliged to relinquish for some time at least, as months must elapse before Colonel Vane could learn her situation. Besides, she had been the great lady of the village, and now she must leave the manor house, and hire a small house only just large enough for herself and one maid. Now she must walk backwards and forwards to church, or submit to be taken thither in the carriage of another! And Ella knew enough of the human heart, to feel that in this difficult conjuncture she must take especial care not to wound Mrs Vane's delicacy and pride by too marked offers of attention and service, else she would alienate instead of attaching her; whereas if, on the contrary, she could contrive to be of use to her without any apparent intention of being so, she should very likely convert her into all that she desired.

It was for three Sundays only after she heard of her loss of fortune that Mrs Vane absented herself from church. On the fourth she made her appearance, leaning no longer on the arm of one footman, and followed by another, but supported by a female servant and carrying her own prayer book in her hand. Ella's fortitude was not equal to behold this change unmoved, though Mrs Vane could undergo it with firmness; and when she curtsied to her with all the respect she felt on her entering the

pew, she was forced to turn away, and leaning on the side of the seat hide her face in her hands.

Ella had the delicate precaution to come to church without her carriage that day, that Mrs Vane might not be reminded of her altered condition, by seeing her drive off in a splendid equipage, while she was forced to come and depart on foot. Perhaps unconsciously to herself, Mrs Vane dreaded to witness this difference; for she certainly cast a sort of fearful look round when she reached the church porch, as if seeking and missing something; but Ella walked on, evidently expecting no carriage; and Mrs Vane appeared, Mrs Elmsley thought, to be relieved by this circumstance. As Mrs Vane walked leaning on her maid, Ella, who was before, stopped till she came up to her, and offered her arm; which she accepted. Ella then began to expatiate on the beauties of the weather, and to praise the pleasantness of the walk to church. "To *you* it *may* be pleasant," replied Mrs Vane with emphasis and feeling, "for you are young and *healthy*, and walking is the act of your choice, not your necessity; but *I* am lame, old, and infirm, and *must* walk; besides I have not been used to walking. However, 'Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' and I hope *in time* I shall be as reconciled to my fate as I *ought* to be." A person of less intuitive benevolence and delicacy than Ella would immediately have offered Mrs Vane her carriage, and made a parade of assuring her it would always be at her service. But Ella not only felt that such an offer at that moment would look as if she fancied Mrs Vane was what is called *spelling* for the proposal; she also knew that it would be pointing out most forcibly the superiority of her situation to Mrs Vane's. She therefore remained silent; but she ventured gently to press the arm that was locked in hers, while a tear trickled down her cheek, and proved to the object of her interest that her silence did not proceed from insensibility. Little did Mrs Vane suspect the design which Ella had on her, a design as yet too dangerous to be hazarded.

One Sunday a violent shower detained Ella and Mrs Vane in the church porch, and the former was forced to send for her carriage, in which Mrs Vane was prevailed on to take a seat. But as the weather cleared up before they reached the manor house, Ella proposed extending their drive, and at length she asked Mrs Vane to get out at her own house to see some improvements which she was making there. "It would be so obliging in you if you would alight!" said Ella.

"But I am not an obliging person," replied Mrs Vane with a pensive smile; "however, I do not know how it is, there is no resisting you." So saying she followed the delighted Ella into the hall, who, stepping back to let her precede her into a fine and spacious library, welcomed her in accents of grateful cordiality to her house. But little did either of them foresee the consequences of this visit. In coming down a few steps, which led from one apartment to another, Mrs Vane slipped and fell, and with such violence, that her ankle, on which she fell, was so much injured as to make it impossible for her to stand or move. Ella immediately sent for the nearest assistance, being internally thankful that, as the accident was to happen, it had happened under her roof.

"This is a sad business, Miss Mordaunt, for *you*, as well as for me," said Mrs Vane, "for I doubt you will be tormented with me some time."

"Tormented!" replied Ella, "tormented! blest rather!—Oh! if you knew, if you could but understand, how I love to be with you!" Here she burst into tears, to the wonder of her gratified though suffering auditor.

"Young lady," said Mrs Vane, after a pause, "You have quick sensibilities and easily awakened feelings, for you have as yet known no deep and deeply seated sorrow."

"No sorrow? What, not I?" replied Ella eagerly.

"At least, no sorrows like to mine, Miss Mordaunt; and I attribute this violent emotion to pity for my misfortunes, and the generous wish to try to make me believe, lest my pride should be wounded, that while I am here receiving obligations I shall in reality be conferring them."



“ You *will* oblige me by allowing me to wait on you, but my emotion had a cause you do not suspect ;—however, in time you shall know it.”

To be brief ;—pain, confinement to one posture, and previous anxiety of mind, had a pernicious effect on the health of Mrs Vane, and Ella had the mournful satisfaction of nursing the mother of the man whom she loved, in a long and dangerous illness. But she recovered, and recovered to gratify Ella by the assurance that she owed her life to her incessant care, and even filial assiduity.

Colonel Vane had now sailed near a twelvemonth. That he was safely arrived, was known by a letter from him to Colonel Rivers ; but he added, that he was then going to join the army under the command of General Harris, and expected ere long to be in the heat of the war.—What painful intelligence to Ella ! But she knew her letter of exculpation must have arrived, and she hoped that, if it reached him, for her sake he would do all he could to preserve his life, and not rush into battle careless, like a desperate man, of his safety and his life. But Mrs Vane’s hopes of amended fortune from his filial piety, and Ella’s of happiness from his restored confidence and his return to his country, were soon damped, if not destroyed for ever.

Intelligence was received of the capture of Seringapatam, and with it an account stating, that the joy of the victory was damped by the loss and the danger of several gallant officers ; that Lieutenant Colonel Vane, after displaying his usual bravery, had led on a small detachment too far from the main army, and was surrounded ; that he had been seen to fall, but that his body had not yet been found ; therefore he was only returned missing.

This glorious public but this distressing private news was communicated to Mrs Vane by her agent in London, and to Ella by her friend Mrs Elmsley, who was commissioned by Mrs Belmont to undertake in person a task she could only herself perform by letter. Ella, therefore, went through the first agonies which such news occasioned, unseen by the unhappy mother, who had shut herself up

to mourn in secret—to mourn, not over the loss of her son's society, for how could she miss, or regret, what she had never allowed herself to enjoy? but she mourned for that fantastic indulgence of morbid sensibility which had led her to reject the personal attentions of that son whom she was now doomed never to behold again; and when she reflected on the pain which her conduct had occasioned to his affectionate heart, she endured the pangs of remorse, and felt in some measure the agonies of self upbraiding. There is nothing, perhaps, which strips self love so completely of its delusions, as the hand of misfortune. Hitherto Mrs Vane had fancied that the romantic love for her husband, which induced her to avoid the sight of her only child because that child had occasioned his beloved father's death, was a proof of sensibility, which gratified her vanity by giving her a feeling of conscious superiority over sufferers more easily consoled. But now her conscience, awakened by the bitterness of regret, pointed out to her but too forcibly, that the only sure and virtuous proof of affection to her husband's memory which she could have given, would have been redoubled fondness for the son that husband loved, and eagerly risked his life to save; and with the pious aspirations of a wounded but resigned heart she mingled the more painful breathings of a humbled and a contrite one.

Ella, too, had requested to be left alone, and was endeavoring to compose herself sufficiently to obey the summons of Mrs Vane to her presence whenever it should arrive. At length Mrs Vane felt that the presence of Ella would be soothing to her, and she sent to request it, little suspecting that her kind attentive nurse, her affectionate companion, was suffering still more acute anguish than her own, from the same overwhelming intelligence, except that hope, strangely but happily born of her despair, fondly whispered to her that as the body had not been found, Colonel Vane might still live, though wounded and a prisoner.

When Ella entered the room, Mrs Vane was too much taken up with her own feelings to notice Ella's; and

while she wept upon her shoulder, she was unconscious that the cheek which touched hers was cold and pale as that of death.

“O Ella!” cried Mrs Vane, “now that he is lost to me for ever, I grieve that I allowed him to be such a stranger to me! I grieve that I did not conquer those feelings, which now appear to me *criminal*, though once amiable and natural, which led me to drive him from my presence by my coldness and——” here she was interrupted most painfully; for Ella, sympathizing too strongly in the self-reproaches of Mrs Vane, and shocked at the words “lost to me for ever,” had sunk in alarming insensibility on her shoulder, and some hours elapsed before she could bear the presence of her surprised and agitated guest.

But Ella, to whom all concealment was painful, resolved from that moment, though at the risk of frustrating the dearest hope of her heart, to confide every secret of it to Mrs Vane, and in the evening she begged that she would be so good as to come to her bedside; and while Mrs Vane gazed with mournful anxiety, upon her altered looks, Ella addressed her as follows: “It has long been, and is now, the *dearest* wish of my heart never to part from you again. I am in search of a proper companion to live with an orphan like myself, a being without near connexion of any kind; and could I have selected such a companion from the whole assembled world, my choice would have fallen on you.”

Mrs Vane, conscious how ill a broken hearted woman, as she thought herself, was formed to undertake the task, spoke not, but shook her head in token of disapprobation.

“What do you disapprove,” cried Ella, “before you know who I am? When you shall know that, I shall not wonder if you should indeed refuse and reject me.”

“Learn who you are! What mean you?” exclaimed Mrs Vane, fearing that Ella was in a delirium.

“I am an innocent but most unfortunate woman. You must remember that—that an intended marriage with an heiress was communicated to you by——”

"I understand you; yes; a union I could not but approve, as it was, I was informed, with a lady of great fortune, beauty and virtue."

"I was that lady!" exclaimed Ella with great effort.

"You!" cried Mrs Vane; and seeing in Ella, at that moment, only a being afflicted like herself, for all her illness was now accounted for, "My poor afflicted one!" she faintly articulated, and clasped her with a mother's fondness, and a widow's sympathy, to her bosom. It was some minutes before either of them could renew conversation; at last Mrs Vane said, "But why should I be induced to reject you when I learnt that you were the beloved of my son?"

"Because but for a quarrel with me he would not have quitted England."

"Ha! I remember now that he hinted to me, his disappointment in love had induced him to go and earn laurels in——." Here emotion silenced her, and rendered her auditor incapable of hearing more.

It is to be supposed that many such breaks occurred in the conversation between two persons so much interested in the melancholy event that had just occurred. At length Ella resumed her discourse thus: "I am, indeed I am, self-judged, and impute to my petulant resentment of a charge that appeared to have foundation, his *original* departure from W——; the rest was the result of accident and misrepresentation. But though I knew that I *need* not have avowed my fault, as you could never have known it, I could not, as a woman of honor, allow you *unconsciously* to countenance, and take under your protection, the woman who had been the means of depriving you of such a treasure."

"A treasure! alas! to *me*, like the miser's gold to *him*!" exclaimed Mrs Vane.

"Here," resumed Ella, pained by her emotion, and willing to interrupt it, "here is a narrative, which contains the whole of my sad and eventful though short history, and also, a secret as yet confided to you alone, the story of that child who is an inmate of this house. Read

it, and judge me ; and if you *can* grant my most earnest prayer, and let my future days be passed in administering to the comforts of the mother, as I am forbidden to pass them in forming the happiness of the son." Ella then wished to try to rest, and Mrs Vane retired to read the manuscript.

It began with her first seeing Colonel Vane, and a minute detail of all that passed between them, accompanied by the letters she had received from him, and the letter she had recently written to him ; then followed what I shall give in detail, namely, a full elucidation of the mystery concerning her journey to Wales, and the infant under her protection. Ella wrote as follows :

"While I was in London I received a letter from my first cousin, the only child of my deceased uncle, whom I tenderly loved, conjuring me, if I wished to see her alive, to set off immediately for such a village, in such a county in Wales, but begging me to mention to no one where she was ; conjuring me also to leave my servants at the entrance of the principality, and proceed one stage alone,—but that at the end of that stage I should be met and accompanied to her residence. This letter filled me with great alarm and uneasiness. Having ever considered concealment and mystery as the concomitants of guilt, I could scarcely prevail on myself to obey such mysterious and suspicious orders. But I had loved my uncle, and I loved his daughter ; and as her manners were faultless in my opinion, and her character irreproachable, I concluded that her husband, a post captain and a very gallant officer, had gotten into some difficulties, and that he being forced to lie concealed, she was, very properly, the companion of his retirement. So little, alas ! was I prepared for the shock which awaited me. Anxious for the life of my cousin, and alarmed at her danger, I set off immediately, and, travelling day and night, soon found myself at the place where I was to dismiss my servants. I did so ; and at the end of the first stage I was met by a sort of farmer's servant in a one-horse chaise, who in scarcely intelligible English told me he

was come to conduct me to Mrs ——, naming the name my cousin had assumed, and giving me a short note from her, not worth copying. After travelling about a mile over precipices, and winding round valleys shut closely in by the most threatening rocks I ever beheld, we reached a sort of cottage, adjoining a farm-house, at the door of which I saw, not, as I hoped, Captain Montgomerie anxiously awaiting my arrival, but a lady whom I recognised as having been governess to my cousin, and who was, I thought, married and settled in Jersey. I had no time to ask questions, before I found myself by the bedside of the nearly dying Lucy, who received me with tears, and blessings for my compliance with her request, and also with an expression of embarrassment and emotion, for which I found it impossible to account. That she had something lying heavily on her mind I soon discovered; and when I found that Captain Montgomerie was at sea, though expected very soon, and heard Lucy say, she hoped she should be dead before he arrived,—strange, miserable suspicions took possession of my mind, and I wished yet dreaded an explanation. It came only too soon. Having dismissed the Welch girl who waited on her, and begged Mrs Benwell, her friend, to leave us alone, she desired me to sit down by her bed-side, and, if possible, listen to her tale with patience:—‘Yet how can I expect it?’ she continued, ‘how can I expect that purity like yours can bear to listen to a tale of guilt like mine!’—‘Guilt!’ I exclaimed, shuddering as I spoke. ‘Yes, Ella, guilt. How will you be surprised, as well as shocked to learn that she, whom you have always considered as a model for married women, and as correct as she was happy, has been an abandoned woman and an adulterous wife!’—At these dreadful words I started with horror and indignation from my seat, and it was long before the agonies of the dying and repentant sinner, and my own consciousness that she was a sufferer, and perhaps a penitent, could quell the tumult of my feelings, and reconcile me to be, at my time of life, the unprotected attendant on such a death-bed, and conveyed to it un-

der all the disadvantages of mystery and loneliness. Besides, I felt that that this was no common depravity, as her husband was all tenderness and indulgence. At length she went on thus: 'Though my husband doted on me, and still dotes, unconscious of my unworthiness, I never really loved him, as I sufficiently evinced in those little quarrels which take place sometimes even in the best assorted unions, for the submissions were always on my husband's side, and never on mine. This was soon discovered by a *family friend*, that greatest of all dangers to the peace of a married couple; unless he be honorable and the wife well-principled; for he who is a guest at all times, and welcome at all hours, must sometimes come when some passing cloud has gathered on the brow of the husband or the wife, and the latter contrasts with the angry frowns of her husband, the unruffled brow and complacent smile and constant attention of the visiter and friend; and if left alone with the latter, how easily may an artful man win from a weak woman a detail of the causes of her husband's ill-humor, and complaints of his unkindness, while he in reply wonders how any man can have the heart to afflict such excellence. Alas! it was thus that I was seduced; and I declare with my dying voice, that I believe *any* woman who can so far forget her duty as to complain of her husband, and to a *man* too, is *lost* unless she happens to have to deal with a man of principle and honor.' [You will conclude, my dear madam, that Mrs Montgomerie did not go on thus with a connected discourse; but that I have, for the sake of brevity, thus joined together the sentiments I drew from her by my questions and involuntary expressions of wonder at her guilt.] 'Our intrigue remained not only undiscovered but unsuspected,—for my manners as you know, were very guarded; and though I had as it were *two* manners, still the fear of discovery put us both sufficiently on our guard, and when my husband was at sea we were never seen together. But long before our intercourse ended I found that my lover had lost all regard for me, and wished to pique me into complete dismissal of him, while I

had the misery of discovering at the same time that I was likely to become a mother, and infamy in all its terrors stared me in the face. However, as my husband was not to return for several months, though he had been absent six, I hoped to be able to conceal my situation, and elude discovery. Therefore, when I found longer concealment impossible, I wrote to my friend Mrs Benwell, informing her of my distress, and she came over to me immediately. Soon after, on pretence of her being in ill health and requiring goat's whey, we went into Wales; and when my term drew near we retired to this sequestered spot, where, attended by a female only, I became the mother of a daughter, the image of you, Ella, especially in the eyes, and you, you know are reckoned excessively like me.—Would that I had resembled you also in mind! But if I can prevail on you to take charge of my poor orphan, the child of shame, my little Ella (for I have named her after you) may resemble you in virtue, though her poor mother did not—and to you circumstances imperiously command me to bequeath her. You are rich, and can provide for her; you are humane, and will protect her.—Here Mrs Montgomerie was too exhausted to proceed, and left me at leisure to reflect, and to contemplate the unexpected embarrassment and pernicious anxiety to which she had exposed me. Alas! in what misery does not one frail woman involve all who are connected with her! A depraved man may be shaken off from the family he disgraces; but a depraved woman, dependent and weak from her nature and her sex, must still cling to those ties on which she is unworthy to depend; and wherever she does so, she leaves, like the snail on the fruit, a slime that marks her presence and her nature.—I was instantly aware of the bad consequences to me of a charge of this nature, unless allowed to disclose the name of the parents of the child; and I felt indignation and disgust at the cold selfishness of this unhappy woman, which led her seemingly without remorse or consideration for me, to burthen me in a manner so injurious, in all probability, to my reputation and my prospects in



life;—and I had almost indignantly resolved to refuse her request, when beholding death in her face, every other feeling subsided into that of affectionate pity; and taking her hand, with more tenderness than I thought I could ever feel towards her again, I asked her what had reduced her to her present state.—‘You know,’ she meekly replied, ‘that consumptive symptoms attended my last lying in; and waiting on this like a sort of retributive justice, they have proved too much for a constitution already subdued by the corrosive anguish of remorse.’

“‘Remorse!’ I exclaimed, ‘and have you, then, my poor Lucy, been so severe a sufferer, and so sincere a penitent?’

“‘I *am* a penitent,’ she replied; ‘but I am unable to give the strongest proof of my penitence; I cannot, will not, confess my crimes to my deceived and therefore happy husband. I cannot bear that he should endure the agony of knowing that the woman whom he adored, deceived and dishonored him.’

“‘But,’ answered I, ‘if he knows your guilt, he will not lament you as he will otherwise do—therefore, your confession would spare him many a pang.’”

“‘It is not true,’ she replied with great quickness and animation. ‘One of the greatest of all pangs is the certainty of the unworthiness of the object we adore; and this is an agony I wish to spare my poor confiding and betrayed husband, in gratitude for his long tried affection.’

“Perhaps she was right, as one considering the peace of another,—though wrong, as a sinner seeking her own good; but on this head all that I urged was urged, alas! in vain.

“But to be as brief as possible;—at length, though perfectly aware of the dangers and difficulties it would involve me in, I made her a solemn promise to undertake the charge of her child. I also promised to conceal her guilt, and never let the name of the infant’s mother be known, except for some *very particular purpose*, and to take every possible precaution to prevent Captain Montgomerie’s having the slightest suspicion of the affair.

“That night, quieted in mind by my promise to be a mother to the little Ella, and with every sentiment of penitence and resignation, she breathed her last in my arms.

“I must own to you, that her death was a great relief to my mind, by taking away a relation whose existence was a dishonor to me,—and that it was some days before I could look at the offspring of guilt with affection enough to reconcile me to the task I had undertaken. But time and reflection have taught me tenderer feelings towards her, and even to rejoice that I may be able to train up in the paths of virtue, a being otherwise liable to tread in those of vice.

“As soon as the funeral was over, it was settled that I should return to Bower Wood and procure a nurse and place of abode for the child, then three months old, to which place Mrs Benwell was to remove her, as that lady, who was anxiously expected back by her husband, could not herself take the child even for a short time, lest questions relative to it should be asked, and she be forced to confess all. But by placing it at three miles distance from my own house, I hoped to escape all observation; and had I gone to see it in the middle of the day, and in my own carriage, all would have been well; but my consciousness made me steal to the cottage at undue hours, and alone, and thence arose the appearance of guilt which has occasioned so much misery.

“As soon as all was settled, and I, as I journeyed towards home, was left to the undisturbed reflections of my own mind, I foresaw with undescribable anguish the whole of the trials to which this mysterious event would expose me, if Colonel Vane became my declared lover.—True, I was at liberty to confide in him, according to my own stipulation for leave under *particular circumstances* to disclose the secret. But knowing as I did his distrustful disposition, and the severity of his opinions with regard to women, his jealousy of their intimate associations with each other, and his conviction of the certain influence of example, particularly among near relations, I felt

that it would be long, very long, before I should have resolution, even if I had opportunity, to tell him that my first cousin, the play-fellow of my childhood and the frequent companion of my youth, was a depraved woman and a faithless wife,—faithless, too, to one of the best of husbands.—I knew very well that he would be jealous and suspicious of such an intimacy and such an example, and that I should have great difficulty in persuading him that neither Mrs Mongomerie's manners, conduct nor conversation exhibited, *to me at least*, aught but the most perfect purity and correctness; and I could not but fear that, by performing an act of pity and humanity, I should in all probability tarnish my own fair fame in the eyes of the only man of whose unqualified approbation I was decidedly ambitious. Still, however correctly I judged of Colonel Vane, I own with shame and contrition, that had I been as explicit with him as I ought to have been as soon as he declared himself my lover, much if not all of the wretchedness we have both experienced would have been avoided; and I shall regret to the last hour of my existence that weak and unworthy fear of consequences, that terror of awakening in him suspicions injurious to my character, which induced me to persevere in a concealment which, though the result of virtue in the *first* instance, when persevered in to a betrothed lover immediately became a species of guilt; and I felt that the misery I have endured from his suspicions of my depravity, has been a sort of retributive justice.

“But should he ever return, (and something whispers me that he will return,) and when I shall present to him as my guest, and the object of my fondest care, the mother whom I know he has always tenderly loved, I shall obtain a noble revenge over the doubts that degraded both him and me, and triumph I hope over every remaining prejudice.—O dearest madam! crush not these soothing hopes, but let me be to you as a daughter in every thing but the name! ELLA MORDAUNT.”

“The above was written, as you will perceive, before

the dreadful news reached us. But I have remembered there is *still a hope*, or I could not have had the heart to write these few words."

While Mrs Vane was reading this narrative, a feeling of pity and respect amounting to enthusiastic reverence was excited in her towards the young and interesting heroine, so deserving, yet so injured; so formed for happiness, yet suddenly plunged in what she considered irremediable misery; for could Ella ever recover the blow? Never; for she gave to her *her* own feelings; and she could not prove her respect more. "Noble minded girl!" she exclaimed, "to take on herself the blame of having deprived me of my son, though at the risk of driving me from her! Leave thee, thou dear and generous and ill-treated being! Never, never. Thy reputation has suffered in some measure through the means of the son, be it the mother's care and pride to restore it by her countenance to its original brightness! for who can dare to say, that the mother of Colonel Vane and the faithful widow of his father would be the companion of aught but purity and virtue?"

Her meeting with Ella next day was a most affecting one; but it healed in some measure the sorrows of both. Ella was contented to receive Mrs Vane as her companion on her own terms; that is, on her paying for the board of herself and servant.

Ella was called away from this interesting meeting to a *new trial*; that of receiving Captain Montgomerie, to whom she had written, stating that his wife was taken ill while travelling in Wales with Mrs Benwell, and that she had hastened to her only just time enough, as the decline was very rapid, to receive her dying breath, and be entrusted with her tender wishes for his health and happiness, and her blessing for the years of indulgent affection in which she had lived with him; commending at the same time her daughter (then at school) to his care and love. Captain Montgomerie had received this letter some months before the state of his spirits would allow him to answer it; and he had been on shore some days before

he had resolution to set off for Bower Wood to visit Ella, as he had not learnt her change of abode.

At W—— he not only learnt that, but heard such hints respecting its cause, and concerning Ella, that he thought it his duty, as a friend and relation by marriage, to tell her what was said, and offer his advice.

It was with excessive perturbation that Ella went down to an interview with this much injured, but deceived, confiding husband ; and Captain Montgomerie was equally agitated. "O Ella ! kind and true friend," said he at last ; "so you attended my suffering angel in her last moments ? Would I had been there ! would I had been there, to ask her pardon for all my faults towards her !"

"Faults, Montgomerie ? Why, you were the best of husbands ! You were only too good to her ; you spoiled her."

"Do you think so ? No ; she was too perfect to be spoiled ; I could not do too much for such an angel." Then he gave way to another burst of sorrow ; while Ella could scarcely bear to witness such proofs of a tenderness so little deserved by the object of it.

"But tell me, Ella, do you really think I did my duty by her ? I thought so while she was alive, but now she is dead I daily reproach myself."

"That is very natural and a very common feeling my dear friend, though in your case a most irrational one ; you were, on *my honour*, in my opinion, a model for husbands."

"She was for *wives*, Ella. Now tell me do you think you ever saw a more admirable woman ?"

"Dear Montgomerie !" replied Ella, willing to avoid a direct reply, "I will not suffer you to go on thus. By dwelling thus on the charins of her whom you have lost, you only increase the misery you ought to struggle to overcome."

"Well, that's right," said he deeply sighing ; "and now to show my gratitude to you for your kindness to my dying saint—Tell me," cried he suddenly grasping her arm, "do you not think she is now a saint in heaven ?"

"My belief in the mercy of the Deity is unbounded," replied Ella solemnly.

"His mercy?" replied Montgomerie, "I was speaking of his *justice*; and from that she had little to fear."

"Captain Montgomerie," replied Ella with a pale cheek and faltering voice, "these are awful, fearful subjects, and I like not to discuss them, assured that the very best of us, in the presence of Him to whom you allude, must stand appalled." And Montgomerie, a little piqued at her not approving of his beatification of his adored Lucy, went on with what he was going to say.—"Well, well, then to talk of something else—and as I was going to say, in return for your kindness to my lost treasure, I will tell you a bit of my mind relative to yourself. I find at W——, that you have been playing the fool, cousin Ella."

"Playing the fool, Captain Montgomerie! What mean you?"

"Why I mean that you have been setting all the gossips talking about you?"

"How!"

"Oh, you know how—and to be sure, though an excellent creature, you always were too apt to set appearances at defiance. You know my poor Lucy used to preach to you sometimes; she used to tell you your manner was too free; her *own* you know was perfect."

"Grant me patience, Heaven!" cried Ella rising and walking up and down the room—"Captain Montgomerie, I cannot bear these allusions to my cousin—they distress me beyond endurance."

"Do they? Kind, feeling girl! Well, I will obey you if I can—but as I was saying—I heard something about a child, a vague hint concerning a child that dropped from the clouds, and lo! was under your protection. Now, who but a romantic miss like you, who, conscious of her innocence forsooth, cares not what the world says, would undertake the charge of a mysterious child? for you don't suppose I think it your child, Ella—No, I would blow any man's brains out who said it was. But, how pale you look! I protest, if I don't believe you are going to faint!"

"I am rather sick," said Ella faintly; "but open the window, and I shall be better soon." He did so; and the tortured Ella recovered.

"And this is all you learnt, is it?" said she.

"All! and enough too; but I hope to know more, and prevail on you to tell me whose the child is, and not to persist in keeping a secret so prejudicial to yourself."

"Never. Besides, it has done me all the harm it can now do me," said Ella bursting into tears.

"I am sorry to distress you, Ella; but it is for your good; and I tell you honestly, you *must*, if you value your reputation, let it be known whose the child is; for though I would fight any man who said it was yours, I must own it is a suspicious circumstance; and I am sure if my prudent, delicate Lucy were alive she would say the same.

"She would do no such thing," replied Ella indignantly; "she would bid me keep the secret so entrusted to me, at the hazard of every danger to myself."

"How little you knew her, Ella—Why, she had not an atom of romance in *her* composition! The plain, sober, straight forward duties of life were all she cared for; and ——" Here Ella absolutely ran out of the room, but soon returned, after a violent effort, to her astonished auditor. "Forgive me," said she, "but since Lucy's death-scene, and the probable loss of one very dear to me, my nerves have been much shattered."

"Poor thing!" he replied, affectionately kissing her hand, "I can feel for you only too well—but about this child, Ella——"

Here she interrupted him, and said firmly, "Captain Montgomerie, my own sense of right has hitherto always been my rule of action, and ever shall be; and I must desire you to drop this subject." At this moment the nurse, supposing Ella was alone, came into the room with the infant in her arms. In an instant the terrified Ella ran to the door to send her back; but Montgomerie reached it before her, and vowed he would have a look at the little brat, and see if he could find out whose it was by the likeness. This speech rendered Ella desperate,

and wildly struggling with Montgomerie, she desired the nurse to take the child away. However, though Ella had removed him from the door by her efforts, and the nurse had liberty to pass, he suddenly sprung forward and seized the woman; and the child's tell-tale eyes were about to be turned on him, when the infant, frightened by the noise, set up a scream, and began to cry in a manner so deforming to its face, and rendering its eyes so completely irreconisable, that Ella was easy; and Captain Montgomerie, holding his ears, was glad to let it depart instantly.

"I will bid you farewell now, Ella," said he coldly.—  
"Upon my soul you are an inexplicable girl! But I will see you again before I sail, and then I hope you will hear reason." And Ella had the misery of seeing that he went away *suspecting* that the town of W—— had more ground than he knew of for their suspicions.

"Oh! my dear madam!" said Ella to Mrs Vane, "I have gone through such a trial! but I came off victorious." And the praises of Mrs Vane were indeed requisite to keep up her drooping fortitude.

Ella was soon called upon to endure a trial of a different nature, and, as she smilingly told Mrs Vane, to emulate her magnanimity in suffering,—a suffering, which, for her sake, she regretted much more than for her own.

The father of Ella came to the estates which she enjoyed on the death of a first cousin of the name of Mordaunt, his own name being Aubrey; and on coming to them he was forced, as his cousin had been before him, to take the arms, and bear the name of Mordaunt.

Mr Mordaunt had had one son, a most profligate young man, whose debts of honor and other debts he had paid till he could pay no longer; on which the infatuated young man broke open his father's bureau, and having taken thence bills to a considerable amount, he married a woman of the town and set sail for the East Indies. As soon as he arrived there he went up the country; and being resolved never to hold intercourse with his father,



and eager to be revenged on him for refusing to pay his debts, he spread a story of his death, knowing that his father's first wish was to have an heir; and hoping, should he marry a second wife and have children, to return some day or other and blight the prospects of the supposed heir by proving himself alive. His scheme succeeded only in part, for his father, though he believed him dead, did not marry again, and the fortune descended to Ella. The heir meanwhile, having lost his first wife, married a woman of color, who brought him an immense fortune; and to this woman he was so much attached, that, as she vowed she would never quit India, he resigned his intentions of claiming his birth-right, and let the fortune go on his father's decease to the heir at law. But when his second wife died, and he sought to lose the anguish her loss occasioned him in a renewal of his gaming habits, he soon lost all the fortune she had brought him; and when his only child lamented in his hearing that his prospects in life were now entirely blighted, he felt it an act of duty and justice to him to assert his claims to the Mordaunt fortune, and prove beyond dispute that Richard Aubrey, the only son and lawful heir of Mr Mordaunt of Bower Wood, was alive, and had a son to succeed him. Accordingly he and his son sailed for England, and after he had consulted with his lawyers, Ella's solicitor received the necessary notice. Of Mr Aubrey's identity there could be no doubt, many persons recognised him as soon as they saw him; among the rest Ella herself, who when a child, remembered having conceived a great terror against him because he had, while on a visit to her parents, seated her on his lap and rubbed her cheek with his beard. The case was, therefore, too plain to admit of any doubt, and Ella quietly resigned all title to the Mordaunt estates, and took the name of Aubrey, refusing to accept any donation from a man whom she could not esteem, preferring to live on the trifling sum bequeathed her by Mrs Anne Mordaunt! The young heir of Bower Wood, indeed, who had become enamored of Ella's beauty spite of her evident dejection, would,

with his father's approbation too, have made her his wife ; but this offer she peremptorily declined, and the father and son were both too angry to trouble her with further attentions.

Mrs Vane and Ella, now more alike in trials, more sisters in misfortune than before, had therefore a new home to seek. Ella could with great economy have lived herself on the income she possessed ; but even united to Mrs Vane's it was not enough to procure to that now constant invalid the comforts and aids she wanted. Therefore Ella resolved to increase her income, and consequently prevent any privations to her companion, by taking pupils ; and as the unwelcome and overpowering intelligence had now arrived that Colonel Vane's body, though stripped and mutilated, had been found, recognised, and buried with due honors, all the hope was for ever lost which had almost unconsciously supported the spirits of Ella, and she felt that without constant and difficult occupation she should perhaps sink under the pressure of affliction. Besides, she thought that she could educate her orphan charge better with others than alone, and she proceeded accordingly as soon as she had prevailed on Mrs Vane to consent to her plans, which she did as soon as Colonel Vane's death was declared to be undoubted, and the heir at law had taken possession of his property, which consisted entirely in entailed estates.

Ella resolved, for the sake of income, to take six pupils from the age of thirteen to sixteen at a very considerable salary, and for the sake of usefulness she wished to add to them twelve children of four years old ; because she thought that though she might improve the *manners* of girls of the former age, she could do little for their morals, as she believed that the foundation of character is laid in childhood, and can never be materially altered ; but at the early age of four she thought that she might not only give her pupils good habits, but eradicate bad ones. And Mrs Vane highly approved this plan ; but she would probably have approved any plan

which Ella proposed, as, being formed not only to love excellence but to adore it, she was convinced that all Ella did was "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;" for, like most persons who slowly and rarely love, Mrs Vane when she did love did so even to enthusiasm. Meanwhile, such was the power of Mrs Vane's countenance and protection to counteract the baneful effect of the slanders propagated against Ella, that she had in a short time the number of pupils which she desired, and the quondam heiress of Bower Wood became as celebrated at T——, near which city she now resided, for her successful manner of instructing youth, as she had been for her beauty, her graces, her taste, and her splendor, when she lived in the neighborhood of W——.

Nearly three years had elapsed since the news of the taking of Seringapatam had reached England, and Ella had been two years a school-mistress, when a gentleman of good fortune and of splendid abilities, who was very high at the bar, ventured to avow to the exemplary instructress of youth the passion he had never dared to own to the heiress of Bower Wood. To virtue and talent he united great personal recommendations and most pleasing manners; and such was his respect for Ella's feelings, that it was to Mrs Vane he first made known his desire to address her. At first the idea of such a proposal startled and distressed Mrs Vane; but her good sense, and her generosity of nature, soon taught her that she must not even wish to stand in the way of Ella's forming so desirable a marriage, and that she ought to combat the attachment to the memory of her son, which might lead Ella to reject this advantageous proposal; while with a look and manner which conveyed to Mr Allington a conviction that she spoke truth, she assured him that she earnestly wished him success, and would second his suit to the utmost of her power.

"Allow me, madam, to say, that if I am so fortunate as to succeed, my first request must be that *you* reside with us; on no other condition would I accept the hand of Miss Mordaunt, as one of her charms in my eyes is

her devoted attachment to you." Mrs Vane was gratified, but only offered him her thanks in return;—she was however pleased to think this generosity in Mr Allington might be likely to recommend his suit to Ella.

Ella, though flattered by and grateful for the love of such a man, gave to his offers a firm though kind refusal; but at length overcome by his pleadings and those of Mrs Vane, she promised to take a week to consider of his proposals, and examine her own heart before she made an absolute decision. At the end of that time Mr Allington came according to appointment, and as soon as Ella entered the room Mrs Vane knew by the placid and contented expression of her countenance what her decision would be. "I have now, sir," said she, "in justice both to you and myself, taken a whole week to consider on the offer you have honored me by making, and I can only say in the words of an old song which I could *once* sing,

‘ Gin living worth could win my heart,  
You would not sigh in vain;  
But in the silent grave 'tis laid——’”

Here emotion choked her utterance; but recovering herself, she added, "Yet that is not the truth neither; while I remain single I may without a fault allow myself to dwell on the image of him whom I have lost—but were I a wife, I could not, ought not to do this; nay more,—and that is the true reason why I will not *attempt* to substitute your image for his, and try to return the love with which you honor me,—strange, ridiculous and romantic as it may be, and though the heir at law has long since taken possession of his cousin's estates, being convinced of his death, there are times when I disbelieve it still, and when I lose myself in a delightful reverie of his return.—But if I marry I must give up this enjoyment, or rather the idea would cease to be an enjoyment; and believe me, I would rather have the pleasure of this ideal good, I would rather retain the power of having these soothing reveries, than resign them for aught which the rest of the

world would consider as substantial benefits. I can say no more," continued Ella, "except to beg you to remember that no *living* object, one alone excepted, could rival *you*, or succeed where you have failed."

Affected, gratified, yet distressed, Mr Allington silently pressed her hand, and departed.

"My child, child of my love and my adoption!" cried Mrs Vane, when he was gone, "I cannot blame you, for I should have done the same." But after this burst of feeling was over, Mrs Vane entered into herself, and recollected how wrong it was in her to countenance in Ella, by her implied approbation, an indulgence of hopeless tenderness which she was now well aware had been improper in herself; and with a faltering voice, but a firm and decided mind, she expostulated seriously with Ella, and endeavored to convince her, that her resolution never to marry, and the grounds on which it was formed, were a dereliction from duty, inasmuch as they prevented her from filling those situations in life which she was so well calculated to fill with honor to herself, and benefit to others.

"I should agree with you in opinion," replied Ella, "and act accordingly, were my feelings of faithful tenderness so morbid, as to make me lead a life of seclusion, uselessness, and misery. But it is not so; though I have not nor ever shall have children of my own, my life is spent in endeavoring to benefit the children of others. Though I have no husband to claim from me the duties of affection, I have a suffering and sickly parent, for whom it is my pride and my pleasure also to perform all the little offices which her situation requires; and while that parent owns that I make her happy, who shall say that the indulgence of my hopeless tenderness interferes with my duties and what I owe to my fellow creatures? Grudge me not then, dearest mother, as I must ever call you, the dreams that repay me in my moments of leisure for the privations I endure. True they are but dreams—yet they are to me welcome and soothing as the distant ray of his cottage lamp to the laborer

when he returns to his home after the toil of the day is over."

"Enough, my child," replied Mrs Vane, "and I will urge you on this subject no more."

About a month after the meeting with Mr Allington and this conversation had taken place, Ella went to a bookseller's shop in the town of T——, which she had been in the habit of frequenting; and seeing the newspaper lying on the table; she was just taking it up, when the mistress of the shop ran to her, and snatching it from her, said, "The paper is engaged, you can't have it." Ella for a moment thought that her adversity had altered this woman's manner towards her, as she had known her in her prosperity and had then treated her with due respect; she was therefore preparing to express her indignant surprise at this rudeness; when looking up, she saw her lip quivering with emotion, and her eyes filled with tears. Immediately a vague suspicion came across her mind;—she had, she was sure, no new calamity to hear;—perhaps then the paper contained joyful news;—and almost breathless with emotion she said, "I know you had a reason for snatching that paper so rudely from me."

"God bless you! that I had."

"But give it me; there can be no bad news for me to hear *now*; and if, as you have seen, I can support misfortune, do you think I cannot support happiness, if such be really in store for me?"

"I don't know what to do," replied the good woman. "I saw when you came in that you had not heard the news, and I was afraid to let you see it all at once, as they say."

"Pray give me the paper," said Ella faintly, and going into the parlor behind the shop. The woman obeyed her, and Ella read as follows; "We have the happiness to inform our readers that a gentleman just returned from India saw and spoke to on the coast of Malabar, the gallant Colonel Vane so long supposed dead."

"I am very faint," said Ella, and for some minutes she

laid her face on the kind woman's shoulder ; I am better now," said she, "but I will go home ; I do not want to read any more ; I know he is alive, and that 's enough." At this moment, while the wildness of her look and the odd sound of her voice alarmed her humble friend for her reason, a violent burst of tears relieved her, and restored her to herself. She now took up the paper again, and saw that Colonel Vane had been in prison, aye, in the prisons of the inquisition at Goa ; that he had suffered much from his wounds, and was scarcely recognisable. "But he is alive again!" exclaimed Ella ; then continuing to read, she found he was well enough to sail for England, and was probably already embarked.

"Already embarked ! and he is coming ! and we shall see him again !" cried Ella. Then another flood of tears came to her relief, and in an hour's time she was able to compose herself sufficiently to return home to communicate the glad tidings which she had heard. But how should she set about it ? There was the difficulty ; and while wondering what to do, she found herself in the presence of Mrs Vane, who seeing her coming, and noticing her agitated air, came out to meet her. "What ails you my child ?" cried she ; "you look I know not how."

"Do I ?" she replied with a sort of vacant smile ; then looking up in Mrs Vane's face, and throwing herself on her neck, she burst into a violent convulsive laugh.

"Gracious Heaven !" exclaimed Mrs Vane, "O let me not have to fear for the mind of this beloved being ! Ella, Ella, have mercy upon me, and let me not have the agony of seeing you thus."

Ella was conscious, though in this high state of nervous irritation ; and making a great effort she faltered out, "He is alive ! he is well, he is coming to England."

"But is this true ? can it be ? who says so ? is it in the papers, and in wide letters ?"

"It is ; I saw it myself this moment." And Mrs Vane fell on her knees, and joining her hands in prayer,

murmured out, "Father of mercies! I thank thee; but not for my sake do I rejoice, I did not deserve this blessing."

A chaise and four now drove up to the door, and occasioned them surprise and perturbation. It could not be, they knew, the object of their solicitude; and lo! two strangers, a lady and a gentleman, alighted; on which the servant came in, saying that Colonel and Mrs Rivers begged to see Mrs Vane. Their errand who could doubt? their motives who could mistake? They were admitted; and as soon as they saw by the emotion visible on the faces of both ladies that the good news was known, they caught the contagious emotion, and the man and the soldier was not ashamed to join his tears to theirs.

"Mrs Vane," said Colonel Rivers, "I dared not come near you, nor that lady, while I thought that Vane had perished for his humanity to me, and my poor Sophia here could hardly value the life she had purchased at so dear a rate. But now that we are both wild with joy at the news of his being still in existence and on his way to England, we ventured to show our faces to you; and here we are, and though strangers we hope to be considered as friends."

"I must give my children a holiday today," said Ella; and she felt an undecipherable emotion while she sent the glad notice by the lisping tongue of the little Ella.

The Riverses stayed with them till the moon rose, and then left them, promising to return when Colonel Vane should arrive. When Colonel Vane should arrive! what sounds! what unexpected sounds! and Ella kept repeating them till she retired to rest to muse over the blessed hope,

"To hear that voice she feared to hear no more!"

The next day she would fain have given another holiday; but Mrs Vane wisely remarked, that as occupation is a salutary medicine for sorrow, so is it for joy, and serves to keep the spirits in wholesome bounds. There-



fore Ella kept school as usual, and to prevent her having any unnecessary emotion, Mrs Vane sent the little Ella to a friend's house for a few days, as the sight of her evidently agitated Ella's spirits.

Bigotry and superstition have destroyed so many lives, and will, I fear, destroy so many more, that one is pleased to find them preserving one life ; and that so valuable a life as Colonel Vane's.

Mr Vane and his wife had both been catholics, but had abjured that church before they were united. Their daughter, however, having been educated secretly in that communion, by a governess, was allowed by her parents to worship as her convictions directed. On her death-bed she tied with her own hand round Colonel Vane's neck a small gold crucifix, conjuring him to keep and wear it always for her sake. Colonel Vane, who tenderly loved her, obeyed her parting desire, and continually wore what she considered as holy, and hoped, perhaps, would in time influence the wearer, for the head of the Saviour opened and contained a *holy relic*. When Colonel Vane was cut down before Seringapatam, he struggled to recover his feet spite of the terrible sabre wound on his head, but did not succeed, and he fell over a mound of earth into an excavation beside it. Here he remained unseen while the field was searched ; but in the dead of night a Portuguese missionary, and one of the most fanatical of his tribe, sallied forth from the pious hope of administering spiritual aid to some of the dying who might yet be sensible of the sacred rite ; and his foot happening to stumble over the mound of earth, he fell over it, and on the body of Colonel Vane. He immediately conjectured that he had fallen on a corpse ; but hearing a groan, he knew his conjectures to be false ; and stooping to examine the wounded man, who was he saw by his dress an English officer of rank, he beheld glittering on his bosom the holy cross, which spoke him, as he imagined, a secret worshipper according to the rites of his own holy religion ; therefore, to preserve the life of a believer, and a believer who was in circumstances to make

proselytes, became an act of the most positive duty. He accordingly tried to staunch the wound on the head ; and having to a degree succeeded, he contrived to carry and to drag the insensible sufferer to a hut in which he himself had passed the night ; and as he was to sail the next day for Goa, he hired a conveyance for his patient to the coast, whom he dressed in the garb of an ecclesiastic ; and having reached the shore, he took him with him on board as a brother priest who had been wounded by a sudden battle beneath the walls of the city. In the meanwhile Colonel Vane, still insensible, and not likely then, if ever, to recover his recollection, was incapable of contradicting his statement. At length they reached Goa, and the priest conveyed his patient to his home, where by judicious treatment he at length recovered his senses, and found himself to his utter surprise in a place and with a person whom he had no knowledge of. As soon as the priest saw him move and heard him speak, he crossed himself and held up the crucifix before Colonel Vane ; but Colonel Vane, who was not used to such ceremonies, took no notice of what he said or did, but begged to know, in English, where he was and what had happened to him. The missionary replied in Portuguese, which Colonel Vane understood sufficiently to learn that he was in Goa, and brought thither by the priest whose care had saved his life.

“But why did you bring me hither ?” asked Colonel Vane.

“That you might inhabit a holy city, where the true faith is established, and, leaving heretics awhile, worship with your true brethren.”

Amazement for a time suspended the reply of Colonel Vane ; at length he answered, “Surely you do not know that you are speaking to an English officer ?”

“To be sure I do ; but you may trust me ; I will not betray you ; I know your secret ; I know you are in your heart a good catholic, as this holy cross, containing this holy relic, worn next your bosom, sufficiently testifies, and therefore I labored to save your life ; that you might live to convert others.”

Colonel Vane, ill as he was, could scarcely help smiling at this mistake, though he felt that he owed his life to it; but he was too honorable, whatever might be the risk to himself, to let his preserver remain deceived any longer; he therefore assured him that, though no catholic, he was a christian, and he could not have preserved a man who would be more willing to acknowledge and to prove his sense of the obligation.

"No catholic!" replied the priest, "then why do you wear this sacred symbol?"

"I had a catholic sister, who on her death-bed tied it round my neck, and I have worn and loved it for her sake."

I will abridge the narrative as much as possible, and therefore pass over the priest's attempts to convert Colonel Vane, which would he thought be of such use to the cause of catholicism, by threats, by coaxing, by hard usage, and by kindness—refusing to let him have the means of writing to the commander-in-chief, who would he knew suppose him dead and report him as such to England; till at last, willing to keep the cross, which Colonel Vane declared he never would give him, though he would when he reached England, or any British dominions remit him a hundred times its value, the fanatic, on his uttering some violent philippic against the Inquisition and its odious jurisdiction, informed against him; and though scarcely able to move, he was soon lodged in one of the prisons of that formidable power at Goa. There he soon fell ill of a violent fever, after he had suffered eight months of illness, weakness and anxiety, before he entered its hated walls; and for many months he was at times deprived of his reason, which he at length recovered to find himself still in his sad and lonely prison, and to believe that a disorder on the lungs would soon terminate his existence. In this deplorable state he prevailed on the jailer to give him pen, ink, and paper, and to carry a letter from him to the chief inquisitor, stating who he was, and begging that a letter from him might be forwarded to General Harris. To this

letter he received no answer for many weeks. At length he was told that a letter had been despatched to General Harris, who had written back word that the person who called himself Colonel Vane must be an impostor, for that that lamented officer's body had been found, and interred with military honors. This overwhelming intelligence upset the as yet weak intellect of the sufferer; for, as he saw no way of convincing any one that he was alive, he knew not how to liberate himself from the prison. He was besides threatened with being called before its horrid tribunal, and it is no wonder therefore that he relapsed into fever and delirium.

When he again recovered, the jailer was so moved with his sufferings, that he was prevailed upon to procure him the means of sending a letter *himself* to the army, to be given into the general's own hand. Accordingly a swift footed Indian was procured, and departed on his voyage and his journey. The letter succeeded; Colonel Vane's hand writing was known, a soldier was sent to identify his person, and in due time he was claimed by the British resident at Goa. But he was so weak, and so likely in his opinion to die, that he begged neither General Harris, nor the resident to whose house he was now removed, would transmit to England an account of his being alive, as he felt that it was better for those who loved him to suppose him dead at his post, than to fancy him lingering in a painful illness which might be followed by a lingering death. And it was long very long, and the *third year* of his absence from England had commenced, ere he thought himself sufficiently sure of life to allow his escape to be made known in England; and having borrowed the money necessary for his passage and subsistence, he sailed by the first ship that went after the vessel which contained the gentleman who had seen and spoken with him.

At length Colonel Vane reached England whence he had received no letters since he left it. The ship was lost that conveyed Ella's letter, and the letters were lost which told of his mother's change of fortune. He drove

immediately to what he imagined the house of his banker ; but strangers inhabited it ; and he could only learn from one of the new firm that Messrs —— had failed, and had not paid half-a crown in the pound. He also added that Mrs Vane lived at such a place, and that she and a Miss Aubrey kept school together. Colonel Vane then desired the post-boy to drive him to the inn directly, where he ordered a chaise and four horses, resolving to proceed with all possible expedition to his mother's abode. "She shall not keep school two days longer, I am resolved," said he, "and Miss Aubrey shall have it all to herself." While waiting to pay the ostler, and as the horses were ready to start, Captain Clinton, only just arrived himself from Guernsey, appeared at the door of the chaise, having only that moment heard the news of Colonel Vane's restoration from the grave. But he was so altered that Clinton did not know him when he first spoke, and when he did, he could hardly articulate the joy he felt at seeing him. "I am now setting off for T.——," said Colonel Vane ; then, with some confusion, he added, "pray, Miss Mordaunt——"

"Is," interrupted Clinton, "Miss Mordaunt no longer, as you have, I suppose, heard before this time.—Well, you are a lucky fellow Vane. But go ; let me not detain you ; I will see you soon." And Colonel Vane's post-boy drove off, while he remained wretched, unquiet, suspicious, and surprised.—Miss Mordaunt was Miss Mordaunt no longer ; she was married then, and yet he was styled a lucky fellow ! No doubt, therefore, she had turned out ill ; and his misgivings were just. No wonder ; for was she not the friend of Lady Harriet Bentham ? And these reflections very much damped the joy which he felt at the idea of seeing his mother, and rescuing her from her present situation. He had the precaution not to drive to the door, lest he should upset Mrs Vane by coming abruptly ; but he went up to it on foot, and gave a gentle knock ;—he then put a little note in the hand of the servant and told her to give it to Mrs Vane ; it was to say that Colonel Vane was

very near. Mrs Vane was alone; for Ella was in the school. She read the note, and instantly recognised the hand writing. "Where's the gentleman," she exclaimed; and in another moment she was folded in the arms of her son.

"My poor Edmund!" she exclaimed almost hysterically, "how you are altered! I should not have known you, my child; but I am altered too,—and you shall find I can at last be a mother!"

This effusion of tenderness where he so little expected it, was a cordial indeed to the drooping spirits of Colonel Vane, and after some little time he said, "but who is the Miss Aubrey who lives with you?"

"An angel," she replied; "she has nursed me, waited on me, and made me the sharer of her fortune while she had fortune to bestow; and when, like me, she became deprived of all, 'of every stay save innocence and heaven,' she united her poverty to mine, and labored cheerfully to procure comfort for me."

"Generous woman! how I shall admire her!"

"Nay, more;—you must love her, Vane; she is young, beautiful, and accomplished! and the only woman I ever thought worthy to be the wife of my son. Vane, you must marry her."

"Never; any thing else, dear madam, for indeed I have not a heart to bestow. Like you, your son can know no second love, and,—but I beg you will allow me to drop the subject."

"At present I will," said Mrs Vane, "but it must be resumed;—and now let me present you to Miss Aubrey." So saying, she led the way to the school-room, the door of which was open, and Ella sat with her back to it, busily employed in teaching a little girl her lesson. Mrs Vane gave the children a sign not to notice their approach, and Colonel Vane heard the voice of Ella as she asked the child questions, and corrected its mistakes. "There never was but one voice like that," thought Colonel Vane, and his heart beat tumultuously;—but could it be? was it possible? But then the form too,—

the dark and glossy hair, the back of the neck ! Just then Ella turned her head round, and uttering a scream of joy and surprise, flew into the extended arms of Colonel Vane, who led or rather bore her into an adjoining apartment.

“How could you surprise me so, my dear madam ?” said Ella as she withdrew herself, blushing and trembling, from Colonel Vane’s support.

“I had my reasons,” replied Mrs Vane.

“But how could you know me so instantly ?” said Colonel Vane ; “for I am so altered, that even Clinton hesitated to speak to me.”

“I should have known you *any* where,” replied Ella tenderly and earnestly, but blushing afterwards at her own vehemence.

If ever man was happy, it was, at this moment, Colonel Vane. Ella had not justified herself ; yet he felt her to be so ;—he found her the nurse, the friend, the supporter, the consolation, the idol, the pride of his mother ; and though little inclined to vanity, he could not help flattering himself that it was a little for the son’s sake that she had done so much for the mother. “But then he was supposed dead.”—True,—and it was then love for *his memory* that had perpetuated her services to Mrs Vane, and that was a purer, a sweeter consciousness still ;—and for two days, every look, every word of Colonel Vane’s convinced both his mother and Ella that he was about to request from her a renewal of that engagement which she, in a moment of anger, had dissolved. On the morning of the third day, being alone with Ella, who had prevailed on Mrs Vane to assist her in the execution of a scheme which she had planned, he was just about to open his heart to her, when the little Ella, just returned from her visit, bolted into the room, and, running up to Ella, jumped on her lap, calling her her dear dear mamma !—The sight of a ghost would have less appalled Colonel Vane ; while Ella, who saw his consternation, said, “There, my dear, go and ask that gentleman how he does.”

“How do you do, sir?” cried the obedient child, turning on him, Ella’s own blue eyes, and long eyelashes. “How do you do, sir?” the child repeated, as Colonel Vane did not answer.

“How do you do, little dear, how do you do?” he answered at length in a hurried manner.

“Shall I kiss you?” she said, putting up her mouth to him; when Ella, seeing his almost ludicrous agony, told the child to go and speak to her *grandmamma*.

“Mamma! and *grandmamma*, and Ella’s own eyes and eyelashes! Alas!” thought he, “I fancied all my suspicions vanished, all my fears removed! But suspicion once excited is like the heads of the Hydra, and cut them off ever so often they spring up again.” However, he felt that the moment *was* arrived when he might and ought to interrogate Ella on the subject of this child; and as soon as she was gone, he seated himself by her, and begged her to explain the as yet inexplicable mystery which involved that child, and the circumstances relating to it. It was not possible for her to make the disclosure herself; and Ella, not without great emotion, replied, “Yes, Colonel Vane, it is now indeed time that every mystery should be cleared up to you, and every secret revealed; but as I cannot undertake the task, your mother *will*. Go to her, therefore, this moment,” said she, bursting into tears, “and I conjure you ardently and solemnly to look upon that child with kindness, and not to execrate her unhappy mother!” Then, hastening from the room, and not at all aware of the equivocal sense of her words, she left Colonel Vane more bewildered, more wretched, more suspicious than before.—“Not quite to execrate the mother! Why who is the mother? Gracious God! can it indeed be *that*——Pity and forgive, I may do; but as to marriage—.” He then went in search of his mother; and as he entered her apartment, he saw Ella with her handkerchief at her eyes go out at an opposite door. “Whence but from one distracting cause,” thought Colonel Vane, “can this strong emotion proceed?” and with a heart more oppressed than it had ever



been, he took a chair, and begged his mother to disclose to him the mysterious secret.

"First, let me put a few questions to you," she replied. You know what Miss Aubrey has been to me, Edmund,—friend, comforter, supporter, child ;—therefore you must suppose that I wish her to find the reward of her many virtues in being the wife of my son, for whom she has preserved an unshaken attachment."

"And if," replied Colonel Vale, affected and pleased at this last assurance, "and if to her other virtues Miss Aubrey adds the indispensable virtue of chastity, that balm which can alone preserve the others from decay, I *will* marry her ; for I love her passionately, and never can be happy without her, though, while I have a doubt of her honor I never could be happy *with* her."

"What ! could you not be prevailed on to forgive one deviation ; a fault excused by youth and extenuating circumstances, and atoned for by a multitude of virtues and tears of incessant penitence ?"

"Madam, madam, what do I hear ? my mother pleading to her son to forgive in his intended wife a lapse from virtue ? Penitence is a fine thing, to be sure ; but I can't say but I admire much more those who have no need of penitence. But all this is trifling ; to come to the point at once, who is that child ?"

"She is the child of guilt and shame, and her poor mother's fondest hope—"

"Oh ! this is too much to bear ! Madam, if Miss Aubrey in early youth, contracted an imprudent or even *disgraceful* marriage, and that child be the fruit of it, I will forgive and marry her ; but never, never, though my health, broken as it is, should *sink* under the necessity of an eternal renunciation of her ; never will I marry a woman, whose virtue having been once forfeited, I shall always think liable to be forfeited again, and who also, in my eyes, has lost the brightest and most necessary charm of woman !"

"And this is your fixed, your final resolution ? Then, poor Miss Aubrey !" exclaimed Mrs Vane ironically ; for

she knew how *happy* this *delicate* and wise decision in her eyes would render Ella, who wished her lover, when put to the trial, should love her better than any thing but honor and virtue. Colonel Vane, however, mistook his mother's words, and indeed she wished him to do so, knowing that in proportion to his previous despair would be his joy on being undeceived. "Here, Edmund!" she continued, "here is the narrative which you require," giving him the manuscript in form of a letter which Ella had addressed to her, "and read it, read it here *in my presence*. The first part it is unnecessary for you to read now, as it contains what you know already. You had therefore better begin at 'When I was in London I received a letter—'"

Colonel Vane, though wishing to read the manuscript alone, consented to his mother's wishes, and also began where she directed him. It was with triumph of the most delightful nature, that Mrs Vane read on the expressive countenance of her son the gradual revival of his hopes and confidence in Ella, as he advanced in the narrative; while, forgetting she was present, he gave way in sudden exclamations to his feelings as they rose, and he never laid the manuscript down till he had read to the end of Mrs Montgomerie's dying wishes and request to Ella. When he had read thus far, and remembered the scene at the cottage, he started from his seat, and was rushing out of the room, but his mother stopped him; "Where are you going?" said she.

"In search of *her*—of Ella—to humble myself before her—to fall at her feet."

"But you will not find her; aware of what your feelings would be, Ella went out; so sit down and read on." But unable any longer to bear a witness of his mingled and overpowering feelings, he left the room, and retired to finish the manuscript in his own apartment.

I shall not attempt to describe the meeting between him and Ella after her return from her walk; and the happiness of Ella and Colonel Vane was soon increased by a visit from Colonel Rivers and his amiable wife; and

while the latter with tearful eyes contemplated the ravages which harsh treatment and illness had made in Colonel Vane, "all of which," she mournfully said, "he encountered for my sake," he could not help surveying her with very different feelings; and as he beheld her restored color, and her now round and healthy form, he earnestly exclaimed, "To see you *at all*, but certainly to see you thus, is a very ample reward for all my sufferings."

"But you deserve a greater still," she replied, "and O that I, who was the cause of separating you so long, might have the happiness of witnessing your union for life! I assure you, Rivers and I came on purpose; and we will not depart till we have had a wedding."

Their wishes were granted; a draught of a marriage settlement, to be finished at a future day, was drawn up, and before Colonel Rivers and his wife departed they had the satisfaction of witnessing the union of Ella and Colonel Vane. Soon after, the man who had deprived Ella of her estates died, and his son fell a victim to intemperance. Consequently Ella, as he died without children, again became possessor of Bower Wood and Briardale. And as I cannot believe that any *woman*, or any *man*, who has been the object of *unjust calumny* and *slandorous accusation*, would not willingly be enabled to clear their fame from the least shadow of suspicion in this world, rather than wait till that awful hour "when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open," I must think that Ella and Colonel Vane both derived some satisfaction from the entire removal of every shade from her character, which took place soon after their marriage.

Captain Montgomerie when stationed off Jersey, where his wife's friend Mrs Benwell resided, had frequently visited that lady, and spite of himself, was struck with the confusion and embarrassment which she displayed when he was questioning her relative to Mrs Montgomerie's last illness.—Still, though he feared he knew not what, he forebore further interrogatories, as if from the dread of learning by cross examination something

that might distress him. Not long after one of these conversations Mrs Benwell was seized with a mortal malady; and on her death bed she declared that she should not die easy without disburthening her mind of the load of deception towards Captain Montgomerie which weighed heavily upon it. Accordingly that gentleman was sent for, and she unfolded to his almost frenzied view, a scene of guilt of which he had not the remotest idea. He found that before she married him his wife had had a secret intrigue, of which Mrs Benwell, then her governess, had been the confidante; and he also heard, that the child whom Ella had so eagerly sought to conceal from his sight, and had thereby called forth in him suspicions of her own guilt, was the innocent offspring of the guilt of that woman, whose conduct and manners he had been as it were reproaching her for not imitating! Now all her emotions were accounted for; now her generous silence, even at a certain risk to herself, was explained to her everlasting honor!—At first he nearly sunk under the blow, and felt that his sufferings on the loss of his wife, were nothing in comparison of what he now endured.—’T was sweet, ’t was soothing, to weep for her while he imagined her virtuous;—’t was bitter, ’t was maddening, to mourn over her as vicious, and as the victim of vice!—“However,” said he to himself, “I will have the satisfaction of revenge!—And as soon as he could set sail for England he did, in pursuit of his treacherous friend and of his wife’s seducer.—He found him at last at Cheltenham, and sent him a challenge; but instead of meeting him, he sent him a reply importing that he would not fight him, and left the place. But Captain Montgomerie pursued and traced him to W——; having first written a letter to Ella expressive of her great merit, and his deep sense of it. The day after he reached W——, being resolved to force Mr Baddeley into the field, he loaded his pistols and went in search of him.—He found him in a coffee-house surrounded by gentlemen. Nor, had he been less angry, could he have beheld without horror, not unmixed with pity, the ravages

which vice and intemperance had made in the once handsome and admired Baddeley; the man whom the woman he adored had preferred to him; the man who had destroyed her virtue first, and ultimately been the means of hastening her to the tomb! Captain Montgomerie gazed on him for a few moments unseen by him, and with a look of such agony as occasioned a motion of surprise in the bystanders to whom Baddeley was speaking, which occasioned the latter to turn round; and as he did so, his eyes rested on Captain Montgomerie.—He started, staggered to a chair, and hid his face with his hands.

“Mr Baddeley, sir,” said Captain Montgomerie in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, “I wish to have a private conversation with you.”

“Sir, I deny it.”

“Sir, I will force you to grant it.”

At length, after a pause, Baddeley started up and exclaimed, “Well, if it must be so, it must; but before I die I will do an act of justice; I will clear the reputation of a most innocent and injured woman.—Take notice, all who are here present, that I, John Baddeley, most solemnly declare, having the fear of death before my eyes, that I am the father of the child now under the care of Mrs Vane, late Ella Mordaunt, alias Aubrey; and that Mrs Montgomerie, her cousin, was the mother of it.”

“Villain!” exclaimed Montgomerie, “and do you boast of your wickedness?”—and was approaching him, but was held back.

“No;—I say this only to do justice to an aspersed and exemplary woman;—for that gentleman would not do it to screen the fame of his wife.—The unhappy Lucy summoned, I find, to her death-bed this lady, her first cousin, and there bequeathed to her protection and her *silence* the fruit of our guilt.—How nobly she *kept* the secret so trusted, how kindly she has watched over the pledge so bequeathed, even at certain risks and misery to herself, I call on you present, inhabitants of W——, to testify to and admire!—And now, Captain Montgomerie, I am at your service.”

But what Baddeley hoped would happen, while he said that, did happen, and immediately ;—some one had stolen out and given information to the magistrates that a duel was likely to take place ; and both gentlemen as they were leaving the city were put under arrest ; while Montgomerie, disappointed of his vengeance, which this wild and wanton exposure of his wife's infamy had made him more greedy of than ever, was taken to Bower Wood by Colonel Vane, who happened to be passing through the town.—But Montgomerie was spared the guilt of taking justice into his own hands ; for the wretched Baddeley a day or two after drank himself at a tavern into an apoplexy of intoxication, from which he never recovered ;—and the wise and pious reasoning of Ella and her husband at length restored Montgomerie to his proper tone of feeling and of acting. But he could not bear to see the little Ella ; and happily for herself, considering the circumstances of her birth, the child, having inherited the consumptive tendency of her mother, fell into a rapid decline, after an eruptive fever, which carried her off in a few days ; nor could Ella, though she tenderly loved her, look on her death, in her situation, as otherwise than a blessing,

It was agreed when they married, that Ella and Colonel Vane, whom ill health obliged to quit the army, should reside sometimes on his estate and sometimes on Ella's ; and Mrs Vane in a house in Colonel Vane's Park ; as she persisted, perhaps wisely, in refusing their earnest entreaties that she should reside with them.

"Listen to me," said Ella to her husband soon after they were united—"I protest against residing in London, or to staying company in the house, except it be men and their wives, for fear of relapses ; for I am well convinced that jealousy and suspicion, though like a tendency to certain disorders they may be kept under with care and attention to avoid the *food* that calls them forth, are never to be wholly eradicated, and may break forth from the slightest and most unexpected causes."

"This is very severe, and even *ungenerous*, Ella," said Colonel Vane.

“Not at all;—and how can you consider it as such, when you, in spite of all my seclusion under the eye of your mother, and the innocent activity of my life during your absence, could again believe, against all *possibility*, that I was the mother of the poor little Ella? Can you, after *this*, suppose that you would not be apt to see cause for jealousy in any warmly expressed kindness towards an agreeable guest?”

“But you would mean nothing, you know; and convinced of that, I should not suspect;—besides, your manners are altered.”

“Aye, so they are, and I hope will continue to be so; but who that has once erred, can be sure of never erring again? and the only security is avoiding temptation.—For you, and you alone, I am contented to live; you alone I wish to please.—*You* may occasionally enter the gay world, for I am not jealous; and *I* can rely on your affection and honor; but I will remain in retirement, which the habit of occupation will always render pleasing to me; and I will consider the pain I inflict on myself, of occasional separation from you, as a just punishment for that presumption which made me, because I was conscious of my innocence, dare to set appearances and the restraints of decorum at defiance. I *know* my manner was too familiar, too inviting; I know that it provoked and tolerated from your sex too much familiarity; and that, but for my manners, neither the writer of the letters, nor *you*, could ever have admitted a suspicion of my guilt. Convinced of this, I have always inculcated on those under my care, what has been the result of my own painful experience, that the woman violates her duty both to society and herself, who gives any one reason to say, or even to insinuate, that APPEARANCE IS AGAINST HER.”

52

JW











JUL 9 - 1981



